
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 7245 of October 28, 1999

The President

National Adoption Month, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

This month, as families across America look forward to the holiday season that is fast approaching, we remember with special concern the thousands of children in our Nation who are growing up without the unconditional love and security of a permanent home. Our Nation's foster care system plays an invaluable role in providing temporary safe and caring homes to children who need them, but permanent homes and families are vital to giving these children the stability and sustained love they need to reach their full potential.

My Administration has worked hard to promote adoption by assisting adoptive families and breaking down barriers to adoption. We have helped remove many economic barriers to adoption by providing tax credits to families adopting children, and the Family and Medical Leave Act that I signed into law in 1993 gives workers job-protected leave to care for their newly adopted children. The Adoption and Safe Families Act I signed in 1997 reformed our Nation's child welfare system, made clear that the health and safety of children must be the paramount concern of State child welfare services, and expedited permanent placement for children. It also ensured health coverage for children with special needs and created new financial incentives for States to increase adoption. We also took important steps to help ensure that the adoption process remains free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture, and ethnicity. We are now working to break down geographic barriers to adoption by using the Internet to link children in foster care to possible adoptive families.

We have new evidence that our efforts are bearing fruit: the first significant increase in adoptions since the National Foster Care Program was created almost 20 years ago. A new report from the Department of Health and Human Services shows that from 1996 to 1998, the number of adoptions nationwide rose 29 percent—from 28,000 to 36,000—and should meet our national goal of 56,000 adoptions by the year 2002. In addition, the First Lady and I were pleased to announce this past September the first-ever bonus awards to States that have increased the number of adoptions from the public foster care system. We also announced additional grants to public and private organizations that remove barriers to adoption.

To follow through on this record of achievement, I have urged the Congress to safeguard the interests and well-being of young people who reach the age of 18 without being adopted or placed in a permanent home. Under the current system, Federal financial assistance for young people in foster care ends just as they are making the critical transition to independence. We must ensure that when these young people are old enough to leave the foster care system, they have the health care, life skills training, and educational opportunities they need to succeed personally and professionally.

As we observe National Adoption Month this year, we can take pride in our progress, but we know there is more work to be done. Let us take this opportunity to rededicate ourselves to meeting those challenges, and let us honor the many adoptive parents whose generosity and love have

made such an extraordinary difference in the lives of thousands of our Nation's children.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 1999 as National Adoption Month. I urge all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities to honor adoptive families and to participate in efforts to find permanent, loving homes for waiting children.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "W" and "C".

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