

Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 7256 of November 29, 1999

The President

World AIDS Day, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As this year draws to a close, the world looks with hope to a new century and a new millennium. But in that new century, we will still face a familiar and deadly enemy: HIV and AIDS. Already, more than 33 million people around the world have been infected with HIV; by the year 2005, that figure will likely soar to more than 100 million.

The theme of World AIDS Day this year is “AIDS—End the Silence. Listen, Learn, Live!” This simple message challenges us all to become better informed about this global pandemic and to serve as strong and vocal advocates for HIV/AIDS education, prevention, and care. When we fail to tell our children the truth about how HIV is transmitted, we put them at risk for infection. When we are silent about the need for compassionate care for the ill and dying, we allow too many of those infected with AIDS to spend their final days unloved and alone.

Throughout my Presidency, I have strived to break the silence surrounding HIV/AIDS, and my Administration has worked hard to eradicate this devastating global threat. We can take heart that many people with HIV/AIDS today are living longer and more fulfilling lives and that new drugs are showing promising results in halting the progression of the disease. However, AIDS has exposed the tremendous gulf that exists between those who share in the prosperity of our global economy and those who do not. Of the millions of people around the world coping with HIV and AIDS, most are living in poverty, without access to new treatments or even the basic care that could increase the quality and length of their lives.

Nowhere is the impact of this disease more devastating than in Africa, where 13 million men, women, and children have already died of AIDS, and 11,000 more are becoming infected each day. In response to this health catastrophe, this year my Administration sought and attained the largest-ever U.S. budget commitment to the global fight against AIDS. This increase of \$100 million will more than double our support for AIDS awareness and prevention, home and community-based care, care of children orphaned by AIDS, and development of the infrastructure necessary to support these efforts. I invite other G-8 nations to join us, and I urge other foreign governments, corporate leaders, nongovernmental organizations, faith communities, foundations, AIDS organizations, and citizens around the globe to make their own contributions to the crusade against HIV/AIDS.

To fight HIV/AIDS on the home front, this year's budget includes a \$73 million increase in funding for HIV prevention activities; an increase of \$183 million in the Ryan White CARE Act, which helps provide primary care and support for those living with HIV/AIDS; an additional \$80 million in funding to the Minority AIDS Initiative, which uses existing programs to reach African Americans, Latinos, and other racial and ethnic minorities disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS; and an estimated \$300 million in additional funds for AIDS-related research at the National Institutes of Health. I have given high priority to the development of a vaccine for AIDS, and our scientists and researchers remain committed to developing a vaccine that works for all who need it.

Until they achieve that goal, we must work together to break the silence and increase dialogue; to fight the stigmatization and protect the rights of those living with HIV and AIDS; and to help those infected find the care and treatment they need. As we usher in a new century, we must pledge to stay the course in our crusade until the world is finally freed from the shadow of this devastating epidemic.

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 December 1, 1999, as World AIDS Day. I invite the Governors of the States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of the other territories subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to defeating HIV and AIDS. I encourage every American to participate in appropriate commemorative programs and ceremonies in workplaces, houses of worship, and other community centers, to reach out to protect and educate our children, and to help and comfort all people who are living with HIV and AIDS.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of November, 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, flowing style with a large, prominent "W" and "C".