

unique diversity. Christopher Columbus, a son of Italy whose bold enterprise was made possible by the Spanish crown, holds a special place in the hearts of Americans of Italian and Spanish heritage. But, as we prepare for our own voyage of discovery into the next millennium, all Americans can draw inspiration from the character and accomplishments of Columbus. With vision, courage, imagination, and optimism, we can create a future bright with promise and a new world where all of us can pursue our dreams.

In recognition of the enduring achievements of Christopher Columbus, the Congress, by joint resolution of April 30, 1934 (48 Stat. 657), and an Act of June 28, 1968 (82 Stat. 250), has requested the President to proclaim the second Monday in October of each year as "Columbus Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 13, 1997, as Columbus Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in honor of Christopher Columbus.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7040 of October 10, 1997

National Children's Day, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

With the birth of every child, the world becomes new again. Within each new infant lies enormous potential—potential for loving, for learning, and for making life better for others. But this potential must be nurtured. Just as seeds need fertile soil, warm sunshine, and gentle rain to grow, so do our children need a caring environment, the security of knowing they are loved, and the encouragement and opportunity to make the most of their God-given talents. There is no more urgent task before us, as a people and as a Nation, than creating such an environment for America's children.

One of the surest ways to do so is to strengthen American families and help parents in their efforts to raise healthy, happy children. My Administration has worked hard to give parents the tools they need to fulfill their crucial responsibilities. We have sought to put tobacco and guns out of the reach of children. We are improving the quality of our children's schools by making a national commitment to high academic and teaching standards. Recognizing the importance of a child's early years to his or her development, we have expanded Head Start and established Early Head Start for low-income families with children 3 years old or younger. We have made it easier for millions of parents to take time off to be with a sick child

without losing their jobs, and to keep their health insurance when they change jobs. We have protected Medicaid coverage for 36 million Americans, including about 20 million children, and the Balanced Budget Act I recently signed into law will provide meaningful health care coverage to millions more uninsured children.

But there is still much to be accomplished if we are to ensure that America's children grow up to meet their fullest potential. Our next important goal must be to build upon our efforts and improve the quality and affordability of child care in our Nation. With more people in the work force, with more single-parent homes, and with more families in which both parents have to work to make ends meet, millions of American children are already in some form of day care, and the demand for affordable, quality child care is growing. Later this month, the First Lady and I will host the White House Conference on Child Care to work with and learn from other parents, child care providers and experts, business leaders, and economists. Together we will focus on the best means to increase the quality, availability, and affordability of child care in our Nation.

As we observe National Children's Day this year, let us recommit ourselves to creating a society where parents can raise healthy, happy children; where every newborn is cherished, where every child is encouraged to succeed, and where all our young people are free to pursue their dreams.

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 October 12, 1997, as National Children's Day. I urge all Americans to express their love and appreciation for children on this day and on every day throughout the year. I invite Federal officials, State and local governments, and particularly all American families to join together in observing this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities to honor our Nation's children.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7041 of October 15, 1997

International Rural Women's Day, 1997

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Our world has been continually uplifted and renewed by the contributions of women. Women of courage and conscience, women of strength and compassion, women of vision and talent have enriched every aspect of international society. In our own Nation, the names of such extraordinary individuals as Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, Jane Addams, Rosa Parks, Dolores Huerta, and so many more, are etched on our history and in our hearts. But there are millions of other women who live and work among