

Proclamation 7049 of November 6, 1997**National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, 1997**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On this day in America, as on every other day, children will die by gunfire, and many of them will be killed because other children are pulling the trigger. This is a stark and sad reality and a call to each of us, not only to raise public awareness of a national tragedy, but also to do everything within our power to end the killing.

There is some encouraging news. The Department of Justice recently reported that violent crime among youths dropped by more than 9 percent in 1996. However, we still have a long way to go in our efforts to save lives and help ensure a brighter future for our children.

One of my Administration's highest law enforcement priorities is to protect our children from violent crime, and we are especially concerned with stopping crimes committed by young people. I am pleased that eight of the Nation's largest gun manufacturers have responded to my Administration's call to provide child safety lock devices with every handgun they sell. We proposed a \$60 million increase for the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program this year, which reaches almost all of our Nation's school districts. These funds will help communities protect students from violence. My Administration also proposed funding for after-school initiatives in communities across the country to give our young people something positive to say yes to, to keep them off the streets, and to keep them out of trouble. Through our Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Strategy, we are working to provide for more prosecutors and probation officers, tougher penalties, and better gang prevention efforts.

But government alone cannot guarantee our children will grow up free from violence and fear. Parents, teachers, religious and community leaders, businesses, youth organizations, and especially young people themselves have a vital part to play. Parents and other adults must set a good example for the children in their care and teach them right from wrong. Adults who own a gun have a responsibility to keep that weapon out of the hands of our youth. Communities must unite to keep schools safe and to provide young people with positive, fulfilling activities after school and during summers and holidays. Most important, young people themselves have a duty to learn that violence solves nothing; to act responsibly when confronted by peer pressure by relying on their own good judgment, and to encourage their friends and classmates to resolve conflicts peacefully.

I am heartened by the knowledge that hundreds of thousands of young Americans across the country will have an opportunity on this National Day of Concern to sign the Student Pledge Against Gun Violence. By making this earnest promise never to take a gun to school, never to use a gun to settle a dispute, and to use their influence to keep their friends from using guns, these young people will take a giant step toward a brighter, safer future.

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 6, 1997, as a National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence. On this day, I call upon young Americans in classrooms and communities across the country to make a solemn decision about their future by signing the Student Pledge Against Gun Violence. I further urge all Americans to help our Nation's young people avoid violence and grow up to be healthy, happy, productive adults.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of November, 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 7050 of November 7, 1997

Veterans Day, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans have always looked to the future. Planning for next week, next month, or next year, we rarely dwell on the past, but rather look ahead to tomorrow. But each year in November, we pause to look back, to reflect with pride and profound gratitude on the achievements of our Nation's veterans. The service and sacrifice of these millions of courageous men and women is a gleaming thread that weaves, unbroken, through the fabric of American history.

More than two centuries ago, the framers of our Constitution outlined in a few brief words the burden and privilege that generations of American veterans would willingly embrace: to "provide for the common defence . . . and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity . . ." Since the days of the American Revolution, nearly 42 million patriots have taken up arms to defend America and to guarantee that the blessings of liberty are, indeed, secure. From Lexington and Concord to Fort McHenry and San Juan Hill, from the Argonne Forest to the shores of Normandy, from the frozen terrain of Korea to the jungles of Vietnam and the sands of Kuwait, America's veterans have risked—and more than half a million have lost—their lives to preserve our freedom and defend our national interests.

Today, more than 25 million American veterans live among us. They come from every walk of life and from every ethnic, religious, and racial background. They are our family members, friends, and neighbors, but these seemingly ordinary citizens have accomplished extraordinary things. They have defended our liberty against every challenge, preserved our values, advanced democracy across the globe, and made America the world's best hope for freedom and lasting peace.

For these contributions, and for so much more, we owe our veterans an enormous debt of gratitude that we can never fully repay. To those who