

**Proclamation 7123 of September 16, 1998****Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, 1998**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

Two hundred eleven years ago, on September 17, 1787, our Nation's Founders signed the Constitution that established our system of government. This extraordinary document, the product of passionate debate and grudging compromise, was crafted by a handful of individuals in the late 18th century; yet it has safely charted America's course through more than two centuries of enormous change and growth and has served as the model for democratic governments around the globe.

The United States Constitution has endured in large part because of its remarkable fairness and flexibility. It created an inspired balance of powers and responsibilities among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government and among the Federal Government, the States, and individual citizens. It also provided for a system of amendment that allows our democracy to correct past errors and omissions and to respond to new challenges. As we mark this anniversary of the signing of the Constitution, we celebrate the effort, the dedication, and the wisdom of our Founders and the blessings of liberty that resulted from their labors.

We also celebrate those who have struggled to move America closer to fulfilling the first and fundamental purpose expressed in the Constitution: “. . . to form a more perfect Union.” Among these heroes were the thousands who fought and died during the Civil War to keep our Nation united and to banish slavery from our land. The 13th Amendment to the Constitution is the fruit of their sacrifice: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude . . . shall exist within the United States.” The courageous women and men who met at Seneca Falls, New York, 150 years ago also set the highest standards of citizenship. Recognizing that women, too, are entitled to share in America's promise of equality, they began a crusade that resulted in the ratification of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote. Likewise, we honor American citizens of our century, black and white, who worked together, faced danger together, and sometimes died together in the struggle to end racial injustice in our society and move our Nation closer to the constitutional ideal of equality under the law. The 24th Amendment, guaranteeing all citizens the right to vote, reflects their spirit and commitment to true democracy.

As we seek to form a more perfect union at home, we also bear the responsibilities of citizenship in our world community. Throughout our history, we have sought to secure the blessings of liberty not only for ourselves, but for all people everywhere. We remember the Americans who fought two world wars against tyranny and oppression and who triumphed in the Cold War through faith in the promise of democracy. These men and women cared so intensely about our Nation and their fellow human beings that they were willing to forego their own comfort and sometimes even to sacrifice their own lives for the ideal of freedom envisioned by our Founders.

In commemoration of the signing of the Constitution and in recognition of the importance of active, responsible citizenship in preserving the Constitution's blessings for our Nation, the Congress, by joint resolution of February

29, 1952 (36 U.S.C. 153), designated September 17 as "Citizenship Day," and by joint resolution of August 2, 1956 (36 U.S.C. 159), requested that the President proclaim the week beginning September 17 and ending September 23 of each year as "Constitution Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 17, 1998, as Citizenship Day and September 17 through September 23, 1998, as Constitution Week. I call upon Federal, State, and local officials, as well as leaders of civic, educational, and religious organizations, to conduct meaningful ceremonies and programs in our schools, houses of worship, and other community centers to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the Constitution and the rights and duties of citizenship.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

#### **Proclamation 7124 of September 17, 1998**

### **National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 1998**

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### *A Proclamation*

For more than two centuries, America has been blessed by the service and sacrifice of the men and women of our Armed Forces. Often leaving home and family, they have fought to preserve our freedom, protect our national interests, and advance American values and ideals around the globe. These valiant heroes have risked—and many have lost—their lives in service to our Nation and for the well-being of their fellow Americans.

Each year, on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we acknowledge with special gratitude and profound respect those who paid for our freedom with their own, and we remember with deep sorrow those whose fate has never been resolved. Americans who were held as prisoners of war throughout our history endured the indignities and brutality of captivity without surrendering their devotion to duty, honor, and country. With steadfast hearts and indomitable spirit, these patriots never gave up on America because they knew that America, and the American people, would never give up on them.

In the same way, we will never give up on our efforts to obtain the fullest possible accounting of every American missing in service to our country. We reaffirm our pledge to their families to search unceasingly for information about those missing and to seek the repatriation of those who have died and whose remains have not been recovered. By doing so we keep faith with our men and women in the Armed Forces and with the families who have suffered the anguish of not knowing the fate of their loved ones.

On September 18, 1998, the flag of the National League of Families of American Prisoners of War and Missing in Southeast Asia, a black and