

tive American populations, and Asian Americans have a high mortality rate for stroke.

However, both the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute and the American Heart Association have undertaken activities to counter these trends. Both groups have initiated major efforts to better inform women and minorities about the threat of heart disease and the steps that can be taken both to prevent and treat it. These fine organizations also continue their efforts to educate health professionals on improving medical practice in heart health and to inform patients and the public about how to reduce their risk of heart disease. As we celebrate their 50th anniversaries, let us resolve to build on their record of accomplishment. By continuing our investment in research, raising public awareness of the symptoms of heart disease, and educating Americans about the importance of a heart-healthy diet and exercise, we can continue our extraordinary progress in saving lives and improving health.

In recognition of these important efforts in the ongoing fight against cardiovascular disease, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C. 169b), has requested that the President issue an annual proclamation designating February as "American Heart Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim February 1998 as American Heart Month. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combating cardiovascular disease and stroke.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of January, 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-second.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

#### **Proclamation 7067 of January 30, 1998**

### **National African American History Month, 1998**

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

African American history is one of the great human chronicles of all time. It is the story of men and women who, with extraordinary courage and faith, prevailed against centuries of slavery and discrimination to build lives for themselves and their families and to contribute immeasurably to the strength and character of our Nation. It is the story of millions of people who arrived on these shores in chains, yet who had the greatness of heart and spirit to love this country for its possibilities. It is the story of generations of heroes who with their labor, voices, vision, and blood sought to change the essence of our society—our laws, institutions, and attitudes—to reflect the fundamental American ideals of freedom, justice, and equality. African American history is ultimately the story of America's struggle to become a more perfect union.

Each year during the month of February, we focus on a particular aspect of African American history to broaden our knowledge and deepen our appreciation of the countless contributions African Americans have made to the life of our Nation. This year's theme, "African Americans in Business: The Path Towards Empowerment," presents an opportunity not only to celebrate these contributions, but also to build on them.

Our Nation's system of free enterprise has been a sure path to inclusion and independence for generations of Americans, and today African American entrepreneurs are reaping its many rewards. In every facet of American endeavor, in the fields of health care, law, government, and education; as artists, bankers, scientists, and computer programmers, African Americans are excelling and adding significantly to the strength of our economy. If current trends continue, African Americans will account for nearly 12 percent of the American labor force by the year 2000. And even more promising, according to the most recent data available from the U.S. Census, the number of businesses owned by African Americans has grown at an impressive annual rate and significantly faster than the number of new U.S. businesses overall. These statistics are a testament to the perseverance, hard work, and energy of African Americans and of their enduring faith in the American Dream.

As we celebrate National African American History Month, let us resolve to build on this record of success. We must ensure that every American shares equal access to a quality education—an education that will offer the knowledge and skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. We must strive to eradicate every trace of discrimination from our society and the American workplace. And we must work together—government, private industry, community organizations, and concerned citizens—to invest in all our people, providing them with the tools they need to succeed and widening the circle of opportunity.

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 February 1998 as National African American History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs that raise awareness and appreciation of African American history.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of January, 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-second.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 7068 of February 26, 1998****Save Your Vision Week, 1998**

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

The ability to see is a great treasure; but, as with any precious possession, it is vulnerable to loss—through injury, age, or disease. Men and women whose jobs require them to work with chemicals or machinery are at increased risk of eye injury. Macular degeneration takes a dramatic toll on the vision of people aged 60 and over, causing severe visual impairment and even blindness in its victims. Diseases such as glaucoma, cataract, and diabetic retinopathy can silently steal the vision of their victims without pain or other early symptoms to signal the need for immediate medical attention.

The greatest defense we have in protecting our eyesight is early detection and treatment. While many Americans receive regular physical examinations to ensure their overall fitness, they often ignore the health of their eyes. Yet, by the time many patients realize their eyesight is deteriorating, it is often too late to restore vision already lost. Even though they may not be experiencing vision problems, Americans should make a dilated eye examination part of their preventive health care routine. A dilated eye exam can reveal early signs of eye disease and make it possible to treat the affliction and preserve vision.

Good eye care is not solely for those who know they are at high risk for eye disease—it is for everyone. Certain types of eye disease tend to develop primarily in children, while others manifest themselves most often in working-age adults or older men and women. By taking good care of our eyes, we can take the important steps to maintain our quality of life and ensure the full enjoyment of all that our world has to offer.

To remind Americans of the importance of protecting their eyesight, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 169a), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as “Save Your Vision Week.”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 1 through March 7, 1998, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all Americans to participate by making eye care and eye safety an important part of their lives and to ensure that dilated eye examinations are included in their regular health maintenance programs. I invite eye care professionals, the media, and all public and private organizations dedicated to preserving eyesight to join in activities that will raise awareness of the measures we can take to protect and sustain our vision.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of February, 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-second.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON