

laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1 through March 7, 2009, as National Consumer Protection Week. I call upon Government officials, industry leaders, and advocates across the Nation to provide our citizens with information about consumer rights, and I encourage all Americans to take a proactive role in strengthening our economy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

BARACK OBAMA

**Proclamation 8348 of February 27, 2009**

**Save Your Vision Week, 2009**

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

Blindness and visual impairment affect millions of Americans. Early diagnosis and timely treatment are critical to minimize vision loss from eye diseases as well as vision loss that is correctable with eye glasses or contact lenses. During Save Your Vision Week, I encourage all Americans to take action to protect their vision.

Unfortunately, most people have limited knowledge of blinding eye disorders. In a 2005 study by the National Eye Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, only eight percent of respondents knew that glaucoma, a condition that can damage the optic nerve and cause vision loss and blindness, strikes without early warning. Similarly, only 11 percent knew that diabetic eye disease also begins as a silent vision threat.

Several demographic groups are at higher risk for visual impairment, including teenagers, diabetics, Hispanics, African Americans, and the economically disadvantaged. Older Americans are more susceptible to eye conditions such as age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma. Children need regular vision screenings because vision disorders left untreated during childhood can lead to permanent visual impairment during adulthood.

Still, eye disease knows no bounds, and every American should take steps to protect his or her eyesight. Doctors recommend seeking routine eye examinations, maintaining a healthy diet, wearing sunglasses to protect the eyes from damaging ultraviolet rays, and using protective eyewear in hazardous environments. The National Eye Institute's website, [www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov), provides resources for learning more about common vision conditions and information on finding an eye health professional. By being proactive and seeking out information, Americans can do their part to prevent or reduce vision loss.

To remind Americans about the importance of safeguarding their eyesight, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963, as amended (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 138), has authorized and requested the President

**Proc. 8349**

**Title 3—The President**

to proclaim the first week in March of each year as “Save Your Vision Week.”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 1 through March 7, 2009, as Save Your Vision Week. During this time, I invite eye care professionals, teachers, members of the media, and all organizations dedicated to preserving eyesight to join in activities that will raise awareness of vision diseases and disorders.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

BARACK OBAMA

**Proclamation 8349 of February 27, 2009**

**Read Across America Day, 2009**

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

Read Across America Day provides an opportunity to support efforts to excite children about reading and to educate families about the importance of literacy. I encourage families and all citizens to celebrate the joy and emphasize the importance of reading.

Every American child deserves the opportunity to solve the puzzles of mystery novels, to discover the beauty of poetry, to imagine the fantastical worlds of science fiction, and to explore their own world through books about nature and foreign lands. Reading provides unending enjoyment and helps unlock a child’s creative potential. We must make literacy the birthright of every American.

Every child also deserves the tools they will need for success. Students must read well to meet high standards in the classroom. Understanding science, mathematics, and the arts requires the ability to read proficiently. Beyond the schoolyard, our youth must be prepared to meet the demands of the global economy. New technologies and steep competition abroad require our Nation to focus on children’s reading skills as a building block for future personal achievements.

Families must play an active role in this effort. On Read Across America Day, parents are encouraged to read to their children for at least 30 minutes. I also encourage parents to recognize the critical importance of literacy for their children’s future and to develop habits at home that encourage reading, such as reading to their children every night or providing incentives for them to read on their own.

On Read Across America Day, we partner with the National Education Association and mark the birthday of Theodor Geisel, whose beloved Dr. Seuss books still inspire children throughout the world to read.