
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 6986 of April 11, 1997

The President

National Service and Volunteer Week, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Citizen service is a vital force in American life, helping to build a stronger sense of community and citizenship and engaging Americans to meet the obligations we all share. Whether tutoring children, mentoring teens, renovating housing, restoring public parks, responding to natural disasters, or caring for aging parents and grandparents, those who serve and volunteer are strengthening our communities for America's future.

The era of big government may be over, but the era of big challenges for our Nation is surely not. Citizen service reflects one of the most basic convictions of our democracy: that we are all responsible for one another. It is a very American idea that we meet our challenges not through big government or as isolated individuals, but as members of a true community, with all of us working together.

Americans can take pride in knowing that our tradition of service is being preserved and expanded. As we recognize the devoted service of our Nation's citizens, we must continue to foster the spirit of volunteerism, making service the common expectation and experience of every American. Working together, we can respond to our shared problems and build a better future for the generations to come.

National Service and Volunteer Week is a time to celebrate the American spirit of service and volunteerism and a time to encourage citizens to use their individual talents to serve the common good. During this week and throughout the year, let us salute all those who devote their time, their talents, and their energy to improving our communities—through organizations like AmeriCorps and other programs within the Corporation for National Service; the Points of Light Foundation; Learn and Serve America; the National Senior Service Corps; and thousands of other voluntary, civic, religious, and neighborhood groups.

Later this month, at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, we will convene an historic Presidents' Summit on Service. I will be joined there by every living former president, or his representative, and other prominent Americans as we take specific steps to serve our children and to rebuild our communities. Our mission is nothing less than to spark a renewed national sense of obligation, a new sense of duty, a new season of service.

I hope that the many related activities in the days leading up to this important event will make all Americans think about our shared responsibility for one another. Citizen service can take many shapes—it can mean joining AmeriCorps as a high school student, volunteering nights or on weekends in a religious group or neighborhood association, or devoting years of one's life to service in the Peace Corps or in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

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 the week of April 13 through April 19, 1997, as National Service and Volunteer Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, cere-

monies, and activities to express appreciation for all those who serve and to encourage others to continue the American legacy of service.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of April, 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-first.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "W".

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