

Bush issued the first official Presidential pardon for a turkey.

Now, today I am pleased to announce that thanks to the interventions of Malia and Sasha—because I was planning to eat this sucker—[*laughter*]—Courage will also be spared this terrible and delicious fate. [*Laughter*] Later today, he'll head to Disneyland, where he'll be grand marshal of tomorrow's parade. And just in case Courage can't fulfill his responsibilities, Walter brought along another turkey, Carolina, as an alternate, the stand-in.

Now, later this afternoon, Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and I will take two of their less fortunate brethren to Martha's Table, an organization that does extraordinary work to help folks here in DC who need it the most. And I want to thank Jaindl's Turkey Farm in Orefield, Pennsylvania, for donating those dressed birds for dinner. So today, all told, I believe it's fair to say that we have saved or created four turkeys. [*Laughter*]

You know, there are certain days that remind me of why I ran for this office. And then there are moments like this—[*laughter*]—where I pardon a turkey and send it to Disneyland. [*Laughter*] But every single day, I am thankful for the extraordinary responsibility that the American people have placed in me. I am humbled by the privilege that it is to serve them and the tremendous honor it is to serve as Commander in Chief of the finest military in the world, and I want to wish a happy Thanksgiving to every servicemember at home or in harm's way. We're proud of you, and we are thinking of you, and we're praying for you.

When my family and I sit around the table tomorrow, just like millions of other families across America, we'll take time to give our thanks for many blessings. But we'll also remember this is a time when so many members of our American family are hurting. There's no question this has been a tough year for America. We're at war. Our economy is emerging from

an extraordinary recession into recovery. But there's a long way to go and a lot of work to do.

In more tranquil times, it's easy to notice our many blessings. It's even easier to take them for granted. But in times like these, they resonate a bit more powerfully. When President Lincoln set aside the National Day of Thanksgiving for the first time, to celebrate America's "fruitful fields," "healthful skies," and the "strength and vigor" of the American people, it was in the midst of the Civil War, just when the future of our very Union was most in doubt. So think about that. When times were darkest, President Lincoln understood that our American blessings shined brighter than ever.

This is an era of new perils and new hardships. But we are, as ever, a people of endless compassion, boundless ingenuity, limitless strength. We're the heirs to a hard-earned history and stewards of a land of God-given beauty. We are Americans. And for all this, we give our humble thanks to our predecessors, to one another, and to God.

So on this quintessentially American holiday, as we give thanks for what we've got, let's also give back to those who are less fortunate. As we give thanks for our loved ones, let us remember those who can't be with us. And as we give thanks for our security, let's in turn thank those who've sacrificed to make it possible, wherever they may be.

Now, before this turkey gets too nervous that Bo will escape and screw up this pardon—[*laughter*]—or before I change my mind, I hereby pardon Courage so that he can live out the rest of his days in peace and tranquility in Disneyland.

And to every American, I want to wish you, on behalf of myself, Malia, Sasha, and Michelle, the happiest of Thanksgivings. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. on the North Portico at the White House.

Statement on Native American Heritage Day November 25, 2009

Tomorrow, Americans everywhere will observe our National Day of Thanksgiving. It will

be a time of celebration and reflection as we gather with family and friends to count our

blessings and remember those less fortunate. But it will also be a time to remember how this holiday began, as a harvest celebration between European settlers and the American Indians who had been living and thriving on the continent for thousands of years.

That is why on Friday, I encourage every American to join me in observing Native American Heritage Day. My administration is committed to strengthening the nation-to-nation relationship with tribal governments. But

it is also important for all of us to understand the rich culture, tradition, and history of Native Americans and their status today, and to appreciate the contributions that First Americans have made, and will continue to make to our Nation.

NOTE: The related National Native American Heritage Month proclamation of October 30 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Albanian Independence Day

November 25, 2009

I send my warmest wishes to all those who will celebrate Albanian Independence Day on Saturday. Here in America, those that can trace their roots to Albania are an important

part of this Nation. Abroad, I hope for continued friendship and strengthened ties between our two countries.

Statement on Bosnia and Herzegovina National Day

November 25, 2009

On behalf of the American people, I extend my best wishes to all those who are celebrating the National Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our Nation stands with Bosnia and Herzegovina as it continues its journey from a war-

torn past to a peaceful and stable future. I especially offer my congratulations to those in America that can trace their origins back to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Statement on the Death of Abe Pollin

November 25, 2009

Michelle and I were deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Abe Pollin, a giant in the world of professional sports and someone I was proud to call a friend.

Abe was a man who knew that being an owner wasn't just about winning championships, although his teams had plenty of success. It was about helping young athletes become good people as well as good players. And it was about being part of a community. Abe

believed in Washington, DC, when many others didn't, putting his own fortune on the line to help revitalize the city he loved. He was committed to the teams he guided, generous to those who needed it most, and as loyal to the people of DC as they were to him.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Irene, his sons Robert and James, and the entire Pollin family.

Statement on the Hajj and Eid al-Adha

November 25, 2009

Michelle and I would like to send our best wishes to all those performing Hajj this year,

and to Muslims in America and around the world who are celebrating Eid al-Adha. The