

Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 6957 of November 21, 1996

The President

National Great American Smokeout Day, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Every day, nearly 3,000 young Americans become regular smokers, falling victim to negative influences and provocative advertisements and putting themselves at risk of diseases caused by nicotine addiction. Nearly 1,000 of these children will die prematurely and be among the more than 400,000 Americans who lose their lives to tobacco-related illnesses each year. Smoking is the single greatest cause of preventable illness and premature death in our society. The use of tobacco is responsible for nearly one in five deaths in the United States, and we anticipate that, unless smoking rates decline immediately, more than 5 million people under the age of 18 today will die from a smoking-related disease. For a country so deeply devoted to the protection of our children, such numbers are a national tragedy.

Recognizing the urgent need to reverse these devastating statistics, my Administration has announced tough, unprecedented measures to limit children's access to tobacco products and to reduce tobacco's appeal to children. In support of these efforts, I am pleased to join the millions of caring citizens who are observing the "Great American Smokeout," an annual, nationwide effort to help millions of Americans give up tobacco and to raise awareness of nicotine addiction and the deadly risks associated with tobacco use.

Twenty years ago the American Cancer Society organized the first nationwide Great American Smokeout. Through the Society's leadership, the event has helped millions of Americans to stop smoking by proving to them that, if they can quit for a day, they can quit for a lifetime. In recent years the focus of the Great American Smokeout has broadened to include efforts to help our young people understand that they should never start smoking in the first place.

Since the inception of the Great American Smokeout, the smoking rate of American adults has dropped from 36 percent to 25 percent. Nonetheless, tobacco use continues to take an unacceptable toll. This year, 177,000 new cases of lung cancer will be diagnosed. Moreover, even as the number of adult smokers has declined, the use of tobacco among children is rising.

On this 20th anniversary of the Smokeout, local offices of the American Cancer Society are hosting a variety of events, including the Great American SmokeScream for middle school students, the Great American Smokeout Pledge for high school students, and the launching of an exciting and interactive Internet web page for teenagers.

The Great American Smokeout is an opportunity for all Americans to renew their commitment to a smoke-free environment for themselves and particularly for their children. Working together on this day and every day throughout the year, we can create a brighter, healthier future for all Americans— young and old.

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 November 21, 1996, as National Great American Smokeout Day. I call upon all Americans to

join together in an effort to educate our children about the dangers of tobacco use, and I urge smokers and nonsmokers alike to take this opportunity to begin healthier lifestyles that set a positive example for young people.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "W" and "C".

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