

Presidential Documents

Proclamation 7171 of March 1, 1999

Save Your Vision Week, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Vision is an extraordinary blessing—one that should be cherished and protected. Complex and remarkable organs, the eyes work in concert with the brain to produce vision, allowing us to experience the beauty and variety of the physical world around us.

Because blindness and vision loss are often avoidable, the maintenance of good vision must be a top health priority and an integral part of every American's overall health care routine. Preventative eye care is particularly important because there are often no warning signs or pain associated with many eye diseases, and, by the time vision loss is identified, it is frequently too late to undo the damage. Periodic dilated pupil eye examinations can reveal the early signs of eye disease and buy precious time for treatment.

It is equally important to protect our eyes from injury, another leading cause of vision loss. Each year, more than 2.4 million eye injuries occur in the United States. By using protective eyewear when working with machinery or chemicals, playing sports, or engaging in other recreational activities, we can help prevent irreparable loss of sight.

Taking measures to prevent vision loss in our children is especially important because their early development and academic achievement can suffer due to vision problems or diseases. Even before they begin school, children should undergo a complete eye examination so that poor vision or eye disorders can be appropriately treated.

As the 21st century fast approaches, our national investment in research to prevent, postpone, and treat eye diseases and disorders has produced substantial results. Laser technology, new medications, gene mapping, innovations in diagnostic techniques, and other sight-saving discoveries are improving the lives of millions of Americans. These advances in medical research, combined with preventative eye care and increased safety measures, can all work to preserve our gift of sight.

To remind our citizens of the importance of safeguarding 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 7 through March 13, 1999, 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 first day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William Clinton

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