

Presidential Documents

Title 3—**Proclamation 7128 of September 29, 1998****The President****National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 1998****By the President of the United States of America****A Proclamation**

Today America is enjoying great prosperity, with the prospect of an even brighter future in the 21st century. Our economy is the strongest it has been in a generation. We have created more than 16 million new jobs in the past 5 years, and we are witnessing the lowest inflation rate in three decades, the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, and the smallest welfare rolls in 29 years. But we cannot consider ourselves truly successful until all Americans, including the 30 million working-age adults with disabilities, have access to the tools and opportunities they need to achieve economic independence.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is making it possible for millions of Americans to participate more fully in our society. However, 8 years after the ADA's passage, the unemployment rate among people with disabilities is still far too high. Almost 75 percent of working-age Americans with severe disabilities remain unemployed. If America is to live up to its promise of equal opportunity, and if our economy is to continue to strengthen and expand, we must be able to draw on the untapped energy, talents, and creativity of this large and capable segment of our population.

Last March, I issued an Executive order to establish the National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities and begin to break down the remaining barriers for people with disabilities. I charged the Task Force with creating a coordinated and aggressive national strategy to make equality of opportunity, full participation, inclusion, and economic self-sufficiency a reality for all working-age Americans with disabilities. I have also directed the Attorney General, the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to increase public awareness of rights and responsibilities under the ADA. It is particularly important to reach out in this effort to the small business community, because it employs most of our Nation's private work force.

Employment is the best path to economic security and to personal and professional fulfillment. I salute disability community leaders, business and labor leaders, government officials, community organizations, and concerned citizens who are working together to remove the remaining obstacles on that path so that all Americans with disabilities have the opportunity to contribute to our national life.

To recognize the great potential of people with disabilities and to encourage all Americans to work toward their full integration in the work force, the Congress, by joint resolution approved August 11, 1945, as amended (36 U.S.C. 155), has designated October of each year as "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 1998 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. I call upon government officials, educators, labor leaders, employers, and the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities that reaffirm our determination to fulfill both the letter and the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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

William Clinton

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