

Proclamation 6761—Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, 1994

December 8, 1994

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Every generation is blessed with its own moral leaders and visionaries. Through the years, America has been graced by the wisdom and guidance of Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson. Many of us aspire to live the teachings of Martin Luther King, Jr. The youth of today might find strength in the courage of Vaclav Havel or Nelson Mandela. Regardless of the visionary, regardless of the generation, the content of the vision endures: a commitment to freedom, an expectation of justice, and a belief in the infinite value of humanity.

From a jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama, Dr. King penned some of the most eloquent words of the United States civil rights movement: "Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust." Even in a place of absolute confinement, King recognized that discrimination, ignorance, and intolerance are far more imprisoning barriers than any common construction of steel and barbed wire. And true freedom demands more than beating down prison walls. Equality only comes by striking at injustice with reason and the power of the law.

Our Bill of Rights and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights are powerful statements indeed. They have moved humankind closer to realizing a society of "just" laws—a society that upholds what we believe is righteous and affirms what we know is right.

Yet in celebrating the freedoms that are ours as beneficiaries of democracy, we are no less bound to those who remain prisoners of prejudice, poverty, and violence. In this Nation and in countries around the world, it is unfortunate that much of Dr. King's work remains undone. Today, we rededicate ourselves to Dr. King's dream, to joining President Mandela as he works to renew South Africa, to standing with President

Havel as he promotes prosperity in the Czech Republic—to championing the cause of human dignity for people everywhere on Earth. Freedom is the ability to reach out and the responsibility to help build. With the wind of justice at our backs, freedom is the strength to lift all humanity to higher ground.

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 December 10, 1994, as "Human Rights Day," December 15, 1994, as "Bill of Rights Day," and the week beginning December 10, 1994, as "Human Rights Week." I call upon all of the people of the United States to mark these observances with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and nineteenth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 12.

Remarks to Summit of the Americas Volunteers in Miami, Florida

December 8, 1994

Thank you. Thank you. Well, ladies and gentlemen, the first thing I want to say is a hearty thank-you for letting the "he-coon" stay in the tree in Tallahassee for 4 more years.

I am delighted to be here and Hillary is delighted to be here with Lawton and Rhea, with Buddy and Anne and Bob and Adele Graham and so many of our friends here in Florida.

You know, I was trying to remember just exactly how I got talked into having this summit in Miami, and it—yeah—[laughter]—when I got out of the airplane tonight I remembered why I was smart enough to want to come here in December. Actually, I have