

have ensured health coverage for adopted children with special needs, barred discrimination and delays of adoptions on the basis of race or ethnicity, provided tax cuts to families adopting children, and offered States financial incentives to move children more rapidly from foster care into the permanent homes of loving families.

We are beginning to see dramatic results from these efforts. Last year alone, 46,000 foster children were adopted—an increase of nearly 65 percent since 1996. All 50 States, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have succeeded in increasing the number of children adopted from their child welfare systems. This puts us well on the way to meeting my goal of doubling the annual number of adoptions from 28,000 in 1996 to 56,000 in 2002.

Despite our efforts, nearly 20,000 18-year-olds still leave foster care each year without the emotional, social, and financial support that adoptive families provide. To help them make the challenging transition to successful, independent adulthood, I signed the Foster Care Independence Act last year. This legislation provides young people who are growing too old for the foster care system with better educational opportunities and access to health care, training, housing assistance, counseling, and other services.

As we observe National Adoption Month, we should take pride in our progress, but realize that there is more work to be done. Let us recommit ourselves to giving our Nation's most vulnerable children what every child deserves and needs—a safe, stable home and a loving family. And let us also give thanks for the many generous and compassionate families who, through adoption, have opened their hearts and homes and changed a child's life forever.

**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 2000 as National Adoption Month. I urge all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities to honor adoptive families and to participate in efforts to find permanent, loving homes for waiting children.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., November 9, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on November 13.

### **Remarks on Returning from Chappaqua, New York, and an Exchange With Reporters**

*November 8, 2000*

#### **2000 Presidential Election**

**The President.** Good afternoon. Well, if ever there was a doubt about the importance of exercising democracy's most fundamental right, the right to vote, yesterday put it to rest. No American will ever be able to seriously say again, "My vote doesn't count."

The American people have now spoken, but it's going to take a little while to determine exactly what they said. The process for that is in motion, and the rest of us will have to let it play out.

I want to congratulate Vice President Gore and Governor Bush on a vigorous, hard-fought, truly remarkable campaign.

Thank you very much.

#### **Conversation With Vice President Gore**

**Q.** Mr. President, did you advise the Vice President to rescind his concession last night?

**The President.** No, sir. I didn't talk to him about it at all, one way or the other. I talked to him afterward.

We had a great talk later, when the situation was as it is now, and we were laughing. We had a—he was in a good humor. He talked—we talked about the unpredictability of life and how he'd done all he could, and he was pleased that he was ahead in the popular vote at the time. I don't know what the latest totals are. And we had a very good talk. And he congratulated Hillary, and they had a nice little visit.

But I was just like you last night—I was a fascinated observer. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:26 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush.

**Proclamation 7372—National  
American Indian Heritage Month,  
2000**

*November 8, 2000*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

**A Proclamation**

American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians are a special part of the tapestry of our Nation's history. As keepers of a rich and ancient cultural heritage, Native Americans share with all of us the beauty of their art, the power of their songs, and the grace of their people. As individuals, they have distinguished themselves in virtually every field, from the arts to the sciences, from the world of sports to the world of commerce.

This month, we celebrate the culture and contributions of the first Americans. We also remember with sorrow the suffering they endured because of past Federal actions and policies that had long-term and often devastating consequences for Native Americans and their culture. But, as the new millennium dawns, there is reason for optimism. During my 1999 New Markets tour of the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota and my visit to the Navajo Nation in New Mexico in April of this year, I saw firsthand a strength of spirit and hope sweeping through Indian Country. The Vice President and I have worked with tribes to foster this hope—through economic development initiatives and improved education and health care.

We still have much to accomplish, however. While my Administration has worked hard to bridge the digital divide and bring the Information Superhighway to Indian Country, some areas still do not have telephone and power lines. We continue striving to provide American Indians with the tools they need to strengthen family and commu-

nity life by fighting poverty, crime, alcohol and drug abuse, and domestic violence, and we are working with tribes to improve academic achievement and strengthen tribal colleges.

We are also seeking to ensure that tribal leaders have a voice equal to that of Federal and State officials in addressing issues of concern to all our citizens. I reaffirmed that commitment to tribal sovereignty and self-determination by issuing this month a revised Executive Order on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments. This order builds on prior actions and strengthens our government-to-government relationship with Indian tribes by ensuring that all Executive departments and agencies consult with Indian tribes and respect tribal sovereignty as the agencies consider policy initiatives that affect Indian communities.

This year, my Administration proposed the largest budget increase ever for a comprehensive Native American initiative for health care, education, infrastructure, and economic development. Just last month, as part of the Department of the Interior appropriations legislation, I signed into law one segment of this budget initiative that includes significant investments for school construction in Indian Country and the largest funding increase ever for the Indian Health Service. These are the kinds of investments that will empower tribal communities to address an array of needs and, ultimately, to achieve a better standard of living.

Back in 1994, when I first met with the tribal leaders of more than 500 Indian nations at the White House, I saw the strength and determination that have enabled Native Americans to overcome extraordinary barriers and protect their hard-won civil and political rights. Since then, by working together, we have established a new standard for Federal Indian policy—one that promotes an effective government-to-government relationship between the Federal Government and the tribes, and that seeks to ensure greater prosperity, self-reliance, and hope for all Native Americans. While we cannot erase the tragedies of the past, we can create a future where all of our country's people share in America's great promise.