

Proclamation 7773—National Volunteer Week, 2004

April 16, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The strength of America lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. Across our country, citizens are donating their time and talents to improving lives and strengthening communities. During National Volunteer Week, we recognize and celebrate those who serve a cause greater than self.

This year's theme, "Volunteers Inspire by Example," highlights the role of volunteers in encouraging others to serve. Last year, more than 63 million Americans gave their time to helping in their communities, an increase of 4 million from the prior year. Through the dedicated efforts of America's volunteers, we are building a culture of service, responsibility, and compassion, particularly among our young people.

Volunteers can make a difference in many ways—by mentoring a child, caring for the ailing and elderly, building a playground, or caring for the environment. I created the USA Freedom Corps to help Americans find opportunities to volunteer. As I travel around our country, I am honored to meet citizens of all ages who volunteer through programs such as the Citizen Corps, AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Peace Corps, as well as many other organizations. Their acts of kindness have a profound effect on people's lives and on the future of our country. To recognize those who have demonstrated a sustained commitment to volunteer service, my Council on Service and Civic Participation presents individuals, families, and groups with the President's Volunteer Service Award. This award is a tribute to those whose outstanding efforts are helping make our country a better place.

America's volunteers set a fine example for our Nation, and I encourage all Americans to look for a challenge in their communities and step forward to lend a hand.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, 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 April 18 through April 24, 2004, as National Volunteer Week. I call on all Americans to recognize and celebrate the important work that volunteers do every day across our country. I also encourage those who have not yet answered the call to explore ways to get involved.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:44 a.m., April 20, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 17, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on April 21.

The President's Radio Address

April 17, 2004

Good morning. For the past year, the September the 11th Commission has met to examine the facts surrounding the terrorist attack on our Nation. I look forward to the Commission's report, and I expect it to contain important recommendations for preventing future attacks.

One lesson our Nation has already learned is that law enforcement and intelligence personnel must be allowed to share more information, so that we can better pursue terrorists inside the United States. In the weeks after September the 11th, Congress made essential reforms by passing the USA PATRIOT Act. That vital legislation gained overwhelming bipartisan support in the House of Representatives and passed the Senate by a vote of 98 to one.

The PATRIOT Act tore down the artificial wall between the FBI and CIA and enhanced their ability to share the information needed to hunt terrorists. The PATRIOT Act also marked a major shift in law enforcement priorities. We're no longer emphasizing only the investigation of past crimes but also the prevention of future attacks. Because we passed the PATRIOT Act, FBI agents can better conduct electronic surveillance and wiretaps

on suspected terrorists. And they now can apply other essential tools—many of which have long been used to investigate white-collar criminals and drug traffickers—to stop terrorist attacks on our homeland.

Our Government's first duty is to protect the American people. The PATRIOT Act fulfills that duty in a way that is fully consistent with constitutional protections. In making America safer, it has helped us defend our liberty. Since I signed the PATRIOT Act into law, Federal investigators have disrupted terror cells in at least six American cities. And since September the 11th, the Department of Justice has charged over 300 persons in terrorism-related investigations. So far, more than half of those individuals have been convicted or pled guilty.

Key elements of the PATRIOT Act are set to expire next year. Some politicians in Washington act as if the threat to America will also expire on that schedule. Yet we have seen what the terrorists intend for us, in deadly attacks from Bali to Mombassa to Madrid. And we will not forget the lessons of September the 11th. To abandon the PATRIOT Act would deprive law enforcement and intelligence officers of needed tools in the war on terror and demonstrate willful blindness to a continuing threat.

Next week, I will travel to Hershey, Pennsylvania, and Buffalo, New York, to meet with the law enforcement officers who see the importance of the PATRIOT Act in their daily duties. They know we must not let down our guard. The war on terror will be won on the offensive, so Congress must renew the PATRIOT Act.

Every hour of the day, America depends on the work of vigilant law enforcement and intelligence personnel. These men and women have difficult and dangerous jobs, and they are performing superbly. In their mission of security, they are joined by members of the Armed Forces who are taking the fight to our enemies overseas. The American people are grateful to all who defend us, and we will continue to give them every tool and resource they need to keep America safe.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:31 p.m. on April 16 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 17. The tran-

script was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 16 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Proclamation 7774—National Crime Victims' Rights Week, 2004

April 17, 2004

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We have made significant advances in reducing crime in our communities. As we continue to work to prevent crime, we also have a duty to help victims as they cope with the trauma of crimes committed against them. Each year during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we acknowledge the suffering endured by crime victims, and we honor those who bring hope and comfort to victims and their families.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the passage of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA), landmark legislation that sustains thousands of local victim assistance programs across the country. Established by VOCA, the Crime Victims Fund provides crucial assistance for victims and their families, including counseling, shelter, courtroom advocacy, and help with expenses. In recent years, VOCA has begun addressing issues such as cybercrime, identity theft, hate violence, and stalking. It has also expanded its services to help victims of domestic and international terrorism.

While our Nation works to prevent terrorist activities, we also continue to wage a war against other crimes. In fighting violent crime, we battle the problems of drug abuse, gun violence, and other threats to our safety. We must ensure that when crimes do occur, we always protect the rights of victims. For this reason, my Administration continues to endorse the bipartisan Crime Victims' Rights Amendment. By allowing victims of violent crime to be present and heard at public proceedings and by giving them access to information, such an amendment would guarantee victims' inclusion in the criminal justice