

Presidential Directive
& Radio Address
Issuing Directive
& Clips, fyi

The White House
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 14, 1996

Radio Address By The President
The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

Good morning. Today we're taking important new steps to make adoption easier and to move children out of foster care faster. These efforts will help to give even more children what every child needs and deserves, loving parents, and a strong and stable home.

I'm delighted to be joined in the Oval Office today by a remarkable group of children and parents who know firsthand the tremendous possibilities of adoption; and by the First Lady who has worked so long and hard on this issue and whose efforts have made today possible.

I'm especially pleased to be able to take this action now, in this season of hope and light. The holidays we celebrate this month teach us that through faith and love we can truly repair the world. I can think of no better way to fulfill the promise of this season than to bring a child into a family and a family to a child.

There are more than 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system. They are placed there because of abuse, neglect or a home life that is neither safe, nor secure. While most of these children eventually return to their original homes, nearly 100,000 of them simply don't have that option. Those children wait far too long, typically three years or more, to find permanent homes and families to love them.

Promoting adoption has been at the heart of our administration's efforts to protect our children and strengthen our families. Earlier this year I was proud to sign a \$5,000 tax credit to help families adopt children. We put an end to racial preferences for adoption. No longer can laws keep children of one race from nurturing arms of adoptive parents of another. This is a good start, but we must do more.

That is why I have just signed a presidential directive with a clear goal: We will double the number of children we move from foster care to permanent homes, from 27,000 a year today, to 54,000 a year by the year 2002. With this effort we're saying no child should be trapped in the limbo of foster care; no child should be

uncertain about what the word ``family`` or ``parents`` or ``home`` mean, particularly when there are open arms waiting to welcome these children into safe and strong households where they can build good, caring lives.

As part of this initiative, I'm directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, who is also with us today, to launch an extensive effort to determine what steps we must take to meet our goal. I want the Secretary to report back to me with her recommendations in 60 days. This report must tell us how we can help states set and meet urgent new adoption targets. It must describe how we can improve coordination among local, state and federal authorities so that every community has access to the best ways to encourage adoption. And it must outline what sensible financial incentives we can provide states to raise adoption rates.

I also want the Secretary to determine what additional changes we can make in federal laws and regulations to ensure that children won't get trapped in foster care. And I want to know if there are any new provisions we can put in place to move children through the system faster and to protect them when they leave.

There are other steps we are taking immediately. I'm instructing the Departments of Treasury, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services to launch an all-out effort to heighten public awareness about adoption and to recognize those in the private sector who are committing themselves to this important cause.

Let me also say how grateful I am to those in Congress of both parties who are working so hard to make adoption a reality for America's most vulnerable children. I want to thank especially Senators Rockefeller and DeWine, and Representatives Kennelly and Camp for their efforts.

The fact that we are commemorating the birth of a child that began life in a manger and became the Prince of Peace should remind us that the promise of God has been placed in every child. We must work tirelessly to make sure that every boy and girl in America who is up for adoption has a family waiting up to reach him or her. No child should be in foster care for one day longer than he or she needs to be.

This is a season of miracles, and perhaps there is no greater miracle than finding a loving home for a child who needs one.

Thanks for listening.

Text of Presidential Directive on Adoption

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Following is a memorandum from President Clinton to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Commerce and the director of the Office of Personnel Management:

During this Holiday Season, as we reflect on the importance of family in our own lives, let us remember the tens of thousands of our Nation's children in the public child welfare system who live without permanent and caring families. Foster care provides temporary shelter and relief for children who have been abused or neglected.

I am committed to giving the children waiting in our Nation's foster care system what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The goal for every child in our Nation's public welfare system is permanency in a safe and stable home, whether it be returning home, adoption, legal guardianship, or another permanent placement. While the great majority of children in foster care will return home, for about one in five, returning home is not an option, and they will need another home, one that is caring and safe. These children wait far too long -- typically over 3 years, but for many children much longer -- to be placed in permanent homes. Each year, State child welfare agencies secure homes for less than one-third of the children whose goal is adoption or an alternate permanent placement. I know we can do better.

I believe we should increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system each year toward the goal of at least doubling that number by the year 2002. Returning home is not an option for about 100,000 of the over 450,000 children in the Nation's foster care system, yet only approximately 20,000 were adopted last year and approximately 7,000 were permanently placed in legal guardianships. While the number of adoptions each year has been constant for many years, I believe that by working with States to identify and break down barriers to permanent placements, setting annual numerical targets, rewarding successful performance, and raising public awareness, we can meet the target of at least 54,000 children adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system by the year 2002.

Today, therefore, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to report to me within 60 days on actions to be taken to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes and at least to double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed out of the public foster care system.

I. To increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year, this report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:

(a) Plans to work with States on setting and reaching State specific numerical targets, using the technical assistance of the Department of Health and Human Services National Resource Centers to make information on best practices available to States and to engage community leaders, parents, and the business and faith communities;

(b) Proposals to provide per child financial incentives to States for increases in the number of adoptions from the public welfare system. Options considered should have little to no net costs, as increases in the number of adoptions from the public system will reduce foster care costs, thereby offsetting much if not all of the incentive payments;

(c) A proposal to ensure continued aggressive implementation of the Multi-ethnic Placement Act, as amended by the Inter-ethnic Adoption Provision of the Small Business Job Protection Act;

(d) Plans to compile and publish an annual State-by-State report on success in meeting the numerical targets; and

(e) Plans to recognize successful States.

II. To move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, the report shall also recommend changes to Federal law and regulations and other actions needed to emphasize the importance of planning for permanency as soon as a child enters the foster care system. The Secretary's report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:

(a) Plans to provide States with funding to identify barriers to permanency and to develop targeted strategies to find permanent homes for children who have been in foster care a particularly long time;

(b) Proposals to shorten the period of time between a child's placement in foster care and his or her initial hearing at which a permanency determination is made;

(c) A proposal to clarify that the purpose of 'dispositional hearings' is to plan for permanency and, as appropriate, to consider referrals for family mediation, termination of parental rights, adoption, legal guardianship, or other permanent placements;

(d) A proposal to clarify the "reasonable efforts" requirement and other Federal policy as it relates to permanency and safety;

(e) Plans to ensure that States give appropriate weight to permanency planning by establishing standards for securing permanency through adoption or guardianship, once a decision has been made that a child cannot be returned home; and

(f) Plans to examine alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship, when adoption is not possible.

Last month, I signed a proclamation designating November as National Adoption Month -- a time to increase awareness about the tens of thousands of children waiting for families and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption. However, adoption must be a national concern throughout the year. Therefore, I direct:

(a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and lead a public awareness effort, including use of public service announcements, print materials, and the Internet;

(b) The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and the Treasury in consultation with State, civic, and private sector leaders to develop and disseminate information about the new adoption tax credits and other adoption benefits;

(c) The Secretaries of Labor and Commerce, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to identify and recognize companies in the private sector with model policies to encourage and ease adoption among employees; and

(d) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management to direct all Federal agencies to provide information and support to Federal employees who are prospective adoptive parents.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Nicole R. Rabner

11/04/97 12:53:04 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Jennifer L. Klein/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Proclamation: National Adoption Month

----- Forwarded by Nicole R. Rabner/WHO/EOP on 11/04/97 12:55 PM -----

 Elizabeth R. Newman

11/04/97 12:20:39 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: Proclamation: National Adoption Month

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 4, 1997

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH, 1997

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

A PROCLAMATION

Most American children are blessed with loving, stable families. But, tragically, in our country today there are too many children whose parents are unwilling or unable to care for them. While foster care offers these children a safe and nurturing temporary haven in their

time of greatest need, as many as 100,000 foster care kids will need permanent homes in the next few years. Many of these children have special needs and require the security and stability of an adoptive family to develop their full potential. Adoption allows these and other children to have the permanent homes they deserve, and it enables many dedicated adults to experience the joys and rewards of parenting.

My Administration is working hard to find ways to help encourage adoption. On December 14, 1996, I issued a Memorandum to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, the Treasury, Labor, and Commerce and to the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, directing them to promote efforts to both increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year and to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes. I also urged them to increase public awareness about the children waiting for permanent families and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards of adoption.

I challenged the members of my Administration to work with States, communities, and civic leaders to create a plan for doubling the number of adoptions and permanent placements for children to 54,000 by the year 2002. And on February 14, 1997, the *Adoption 2002* report, outlining changes in policies and practices necessary to reach this goal, was released. Since then, we have been actively implementing the recommendations included in the report, and States are reviewing data and submitting numerical targets for adoption and guardianships to be completed by the year 2002. The Office of Personnel Management has published a guide for Federal workers interested in adopting, and the Department of Health and Human Services is preparing to make the first annual Adoption 2002 Excellence awards later this year. Finally, the Congress is considering historic legislation that would provide the resources and statutory authority for financial incentives, technical assistance, and improved judicial decision-making for children in foster care.

As a Nation, we have before us an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of our most vulnerable children. We must continue to promote public awareness of the need for adoptive families and to help families make the choice to provide loving, permanent homes for the many children who otherwise must continue to wait. We must also strengthen our

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support of those families who do choose to adopt. As we observe National Adoption Month, we reaffirm our commitment to adoption as a new beginning for thousands of children, and we celebrate the many American families who have embraced these children by accepting the rewards and responsibilities of adoption.

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 1997 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 homes for waiting children.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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Message Sent To: _____

Text of Presidential Directive on Adoption

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I am committed to giving the children waiting in our Nation's foster care system what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The goal for every child in our Nation's public welfare system is permanency in a safe and stable home, whether it be returning home, adoption, legal guardianship, or another permanent placement. While the great majority of children in foster care will return home, for about one in five, returning home is not an option, and they will need another home, one that is caring and safe. These children wait far too long -- typically over 3 years, but for many children much longer -- to be placed in permanent homes. Each year, State child welfare agencies secure homes for less than one-third of the children whose goal is adoption or an alternate permanent placement. I know we can do better.

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(d) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management to direct all Federal agencies to provide information and support to Federal employees who are prospective adoptive parents.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 14, 1996

Radio Address By The President

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

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Promoting adoption has been at the heart of our administration's efforts to protect our children and strengthen our families. Earlier this year I was proud to sign a \$5,000 tax credit to help families adopt children. We put an end to racial preferences for adoption. No longer can laws keep children of one race from nurturing arms of adoptive parents of another. This is a good start, but we must do more.

That is why I have just signed a presidential directive with a clear goal: We will double the number of children we move from foster care to permanent homes, from 27,000 a year today, to 54,000 a year by the year 2002. With this effort we're saying no child should be trapped in the limbo of foster care; no child should be

uncertain about what the word ``family`` or ``parents`` or ``home`` mean, particularly when there are open arms waiting to welcome these children into safe and strong households where they can build good, caring lives.

As part of this initiative, I'm directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, who is also with us today, to launch an extensive effort to determine what steps we must take to meet our goal. I want the Secretary to report back to me with her recommendations in 60 days. This report must tell us how we can help states set and meet urgent new adoption targets. It must describe how we can improve coordination among local, state and federal authorities so that every community has access to the best ways to encourage adoption. And it must outline what sensible financial incentives we can provide states to raise adoption rates.

I also want the Secretary to determine what additional changes we can make in federal laws and regulations to ensure that children won't get trapped in foster care. And I want to know if there are any new provisions we can put in place to move children through the system faster and to protect them when they leave.

There are other steps we are taking immediately. I'm instructing the Departments of Treasury, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services to launch an all-out effort to heighten public awareness about adoption and to recognize those in the private sector who are committing themselves to this important cause.

Let me also say how grateful I am to those in Congress of both parties who are working so hard to make adoption a reality for America's most vulnerable children. I want to thank especially Senators Rockefeller and DeWine, and Representatives Kennelly and Camp for their efforts.

The fact that we are commemorating the birth of a child that began life in a manger and became the Prince of Peace should remind us that the promise of God has been placed in every child. We must work tirelessly to make sure that every boy and girl in America who is up for adoption has a family waiting up to reach him or her. No child should be in foster care for one day longer than he or she needs to be.

This is a season of miracles, and perhaps there is no greater miracle than finding a loving home for a child who needs one.

Thanks for listening.

Todd
Uncleared

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 24, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR:

FIRST LADY'S STAFF (MELANNE VERVEER)
✓ TODD STERN (PHIL CAPLAN)
JACK QUINN (KATHLEEN WALLMAN)
KITTY HIGGINS
JOHN HILLEY
CAROL RASCO
DOUG SOSNIK
ALEXIS HERMAN
JODIE TORKELSON
ANNE HAWLEY/STEPHANIE STREETT - FYI

FROM:

Lana Dickey/Reuben Musgrave
for JIM DORSKIND

SUBJECT:

(Draft Proclamation)
National Adoption Month

Attached for your review is the above-mentioned proclamation designating November 1996, as "National Adoption Month."

It was drafted and edited/revised by the Presidential Letters and Messages Office.

IMMEDIATE ATTENTION REQUIRED. Written or oral response required by no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, October 25, 1996. IF WE HAVE NOT HEARD FROM YOU BY 5:00 P.M., WE WILL ASSUME THAT THE DRAFT IS ACCEPTABLE TO YOU.

For questions, discussion, or routine clearance, contact Lana Dickey, extension 67487, or Reuben Musgrave, extension 65518, via phone or interoffice mail, in room 91. Thank you.

J -
cc: Tim Saunders
Loop/1) OK now.
OK with you?
ml

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH, 1996

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Thousands of American children have never known what it is like to belong to a family -- to grow up with the comfort and security that most of us take for granted. They are children whose parents, for a variety of reasons, are unable or unwilling to care for them. Instead, these children often find themselves drifting from home to home in foster care. They live every day without mothers or fathers to guide them, nurture them, and tell them that they are special.

Adoption is a commonsense solution that places children in permanent homes with parents who will offer them love and security. National Adoption Month is a time for all Americans to reflect on the rewards of joining children who need families with adults who want the responsibility and joys of parenthood. This Month is an opportunity to celebrate family, especially families formed by adoptions.

Our Nation has no greater responsibility than to ensure that every child has the chance to live up to his or her God-given potential. We can help meet that challenge by identifying a permanent, loving family for every child waiting in the foster care system.

Among the approximately 86,000 children who will await adoption within the next few years are tens of thousands with special needs. Many of these, through no fault of their own, wait years for adoption. Yet these children can bring the same joy, affection, and respect to their adoptive families that other children show when they are accepted into loving family environments.

In recent years, we have made important strides in encouraging parents to adopt. I have signed legislation to help facilitate adoptions by prohibiting discrimination based on race or ethnicity, increasing the recruitment of adoptive parents, and providing a tax credit to families who adopt children.

Much remains to be done, however. As a Nation, we must continue to work to remove obstacles to adoption, to recruit new adoptive families, to offer financial incentives for placements, and to provide support to parents adopting children with special needs. Nothing should stand in the way of providing every boy and girl in America the permanent, loving home each of them so deserves. Children are, after all, our country's most precious resource and our most important responsibility.

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 1996 as National Adoption Month. I urge the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate activities and programs and to participate in efforts to find permanent homes for waiting children.

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

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

Internal Transcript

October 1, 1995

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN CATHOLIC ROUNDTABLE

*In case you
haven't seen*

The Cabinet Room

12:15 P.M. EDT

Well, welcome. I'm glad to see you.

Q Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I know you have a lot of questions, so I want to get right into it.

But before we start, I thought I'd like to just say a couple of things.

First of all, I'm happy to tell you that when the Pope comes here next month, I will have the opportunity to meet with him up in New Jersey; I'm looking forward to that. I think it will be our third meeting; the first in Denver and the second at the Vatican. I'm very, very happy about that.

As you know, we're having a lot of interesting budget discussions here in Washington today, and a lot of you because of your particular interests are deeply familiar with the various issues in play. But I would like to just make a couple of observations.

First, I think when the history of this era is written, people will look back on it and say it was the period of most profound economic and social change since the industrial revolution came to America 100 years ago.

And when we became an industrial and more urbanized society, moving out of a rural, more agricultural society, it took us about 20 years, from more or less the end of the 1890s to the beginning of the end of the teens -- 1916 to 1919, to work out what we thought the responsibility of our nation's government was and what our common responsibilities were to deal with that. Now, that was defined all the way up and through the Great Depression and then after World War II. But essentially, the pattern was set in that 20 years.

But I did believe that unless the world community said that there has to be a limit to the slaughter of innocent civilians and we have recognized this government and we're not going to let them be dismembered anymore, that we cannot make peace.

On the other hand, I also thought it was very important that in the first security crisis in Europe after the end of the Cold War that the Europeans be supported, be permitted to take the lead, as they asked to do before I became President, and that we had to preserve our ability to work with the United Nations and with NATO for the long run, even beyond Bosnia -- there will be other issues and other days, and we're trying to make the U.N. work for the first time. And at the end of the Cold War, we've really got a chance to make it work in important ways, and it has in Cambodia -- the U.N. has played an important role in Angola and a lot of other places.

So there were times where I had to sit and watch things occur in Bosnia that I thought were wrong, that I thought more aggressive policy might prevent. But I knew that the French and the British were on the ground there with the Dutch and others, and I knew they were feeding people who would be dying otherwise. I knew that the very presence of the U.N. forces there were keeping people alive who would not have been alive otherwise.

And so I had to live in a kind of political purgatory for some weeks and months when things were going on that I didn't agree with because of the utter competing and offsetting -- where there seemed to be two moralities and two practicalities and two sets of facts that were completely at loggerheads with each other. Those are the most difficult decisions for me -- not the ones that are clearly unpopular or clearly likely to provoke a terrible reaction, but when there really are these competing considerations which cannot be easily sorted on one side or the other.

Q Mr. President, we've talked tangentially about the issue of abortion as one that many Catholics are very concerned about. You've said that you would like abortion to be safe, legal and rare. But many people see your administration as having consistently moved in the direction of making abortion more accessible in the direction of more funding for abortion as being, quite frankly, pro-abortion in various ways.

Could you point to some things that your administration has done, or could do, to make abortion rare?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, we've maintained what I think was basically the present policy with regard to the operation of the Medicaid program, except

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I thought -- I do believe that we should -- for a while, we had a rape and incest addition to the life of the mother exception, and we repealed the Mexico City policy because I thought it was inconsistent with what the law was in this country and, therefore, what our policy ought to be.

The best example of it is the work I've done to try to increase the number of adoptions, and I hope to do more of that, and to try to remove the barriers to cross-racial adoptions, which I think are a pivotal factor in succeeding in getting America into a situation where we can do that.

I think we also need to do more than we have done, but I want to do more to speed up the process of adoptions, to move them so that we can begin then to hold out to young people who aren't married but who do get pregnant the possibility of having adoption as a real and viable, immediate alternative that we can push and publicize.

Hillary wrote a column -- interestingly, Hillary wrote one of her newspaper columns about what we wanted to do in adoption and about what we were trying to do to strip away the barriers to cross-racial adoptions. And it got a bigger response than all of the newspaper columns that she's written by far, since she started writing the column; the adoption column got way the biggest response. So I think that there is out there in the country a kind of a yearning for doing something about this, and maybe a lot of people who haven't thought about it before would be willing to take responsibility for some of these children if they were brought into the world, and my own view is that that is something we could do that would -- I think has the potential to substantially reduce the abortion rate, because people thought -- began to focus on and see adoption as a real, viable alternative, and to see an American system that has some integrity and speed to it -- I mean, appropriate speed, not just throwing these kids in any kind of situation.

But I think the whole adoption process in America has been overly bureaucratized and is also somewhat arbitrary in terms of who is successful or not in getting a child, and I would like to see this thing moved very rapidly.

I think it is an area where the government and the Catholic Church, and even a lot of people who would otherwise never support us on anything might come together and find a common ground. And I would very much like to see it done.

Q Mr. President, there is a thought in some members of the Catholic community that with regard to some

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 1, 1995

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH
1995

Background

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

For many people across the United States, adoption provides a means for building and strengthening families. It places children into loving, permanent homes where they can flourish and grow up to become happy, healthy, productive members of our national community. Adoption also enables adults to experience the unique joys of parenthood.

As many as 70,000 children in America's foster care system may need adoptive families in the next few years -- young people of all ages and backgrounds who, for whatever reason, cannot return to their original homes. Many, but not all, are children with special needs. These young people long for the same affection, security, and stability that most of us take for granted, yet too many have waited -- and will continue to wait -- for years to be adopted.

My Administration has taken important actions to encourage adoption and to support the wonderful families that choose to open their hearts and homes to waiting children. The Multiethnic Placement Act, which I signed into law in October 1994, helps to facilitate adoption for all children and families, regardless of their race or ethnic origin. We will continue to champion and improve programs that break down barriers to adoption through aggressive recruitment of families, financial aid to support placements, and technical assistance to agencies committed to special needs adoption.

As we observe National Adoption Month, we celebrate these achievements and recognize the rewards of adoption, but we must also remember that much work remains to be done. Citizens from all communities and organizations from the public and private sectors must join together to renew our commitment to finding permanent homes for each one of America's children.

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 1995, as National Adoption Month. I urge the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate activities and programs and to participate in efforts to find permanent homes for waiting children.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this

first day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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