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National Neighborhood Crime Watch Day, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Crime prevention is at the top of our Nation's public policy agenda for the simple reason that crime is still all too commonplace. Each year in America millions of our citizens face the stark reality of crime, suffering losses of property and injuries to personal health that exact from them and from all of us a terrible cost. Although new laws, more aggressive prosecution, swifter and more certain punishment, and programs to aid innocent victims are doing much to deter crime and to redress the harm it causes, our citizens continue to find new ways to work with law enforcement officials to prevent crime before it happens.

Passivity in the fight against crime is now passe. Across the Nation law-abiding citizens are banding together and, in close cooperation with the appropriate agencies of government, they are taking the initiative to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their neighborhoods. The effectiveness of this form of deterrence against crime has been proven in community after community, and it all boils down to one guiding principle—neighbors looking out for neighbors.

Twenty-two million American households were touched by crime last year—a staggering figure, but still the lowest in a decade. The decline that has taken place is certainly due in part to greater public awareness of crime and increased citizen participation in crime prevention activities. The statistics represent improved safeguarding of homes and property, but their real significance is the improved security and well-being of our people—the core values any society is constituted to protect.

We must do all we can to make more citizens aware of the importance of community crime watch programs and the impact they as individuals can have on the detection, reporting, discouragement, and solution of crimes. On August 11, 1987, a "National Night Out" campaign will be conducted to call attention to the importance of these programs. All Americans are urged to participate that evening by spending the hour between 8:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. on the lawns, porches, or steps in front of their homes, thereby emphasizing that looking out for one's neighbors is still the most effective form of crime prevention.

Participation in this nationwide event will also demonstrate the value and effectiveness of police and community cooperation in crime prevention. It will generate support for the worthwhile campaign the National Crime Prevention Council is conducting through its Crime Prevention Coalition. This Coalition, composed of organizations representing law enforcement, business, labor, minorities, the elderly, and various public interest groups, seeks to promote citizen involvement in crime watch activities and, through public service advertising and publications, provides information on how citizens can better protect themselves.

The Coalition's campaign features the trench-coated, floppy-eared dog, McGruff, popularized on radio and television and in newspapers and magazines. His message is basic and direct: We can all "Take a Bite Out of Crime" by playing a role in neighborhood block watches, citizen patrols, escort services for the elderly and the vulnerable, and similar activities and by taking a few simple precautions.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 121, has designated August 11, 1987, as "National Neighborhood Crime Watch Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim August 11, 1987, as National Neighborhood Crime Watch Day. I call upon the people of the United States to spend the period from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on that date with their neighbors in front of their homes to demonstrate support for community crime watch programs and to signal to criminals that neighborhoods are joining together to fight crime.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

Ronald Reagan