



National Adoption Week, 1986

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The family is the most important unit in society, because belonging to a family is so important to the individual. We all need the love and the nurture of a family. Children belong in a family, where they can be cared for and taught the moral values and traditions that give order and stability to our lives and to society as a whole. Many adults, who cannot have children or who have room in their hearts for more of them, desire the special joy of sharing their homes with children who would otherwise have none. For these families, adoption represents a happy marriage of personal needs that serves society's larger interests as well.

Despite the many parents who want and wait for children and the perfect gift of life adoption can represent, it has tended to become the forgotten option in America. Many Americans, however, are taking courageous steps to reverse this trend and to promote public awareness of the positive advantages of adoption. For instance, they are making us aware that today in America approximately 36,000 children are legally eligible and waiting for adoption. These children have special needs that loving and generous people can meet. Some of these children are physically, mentally, or emotionally handicapped, while some are older, or belong to minority groups, or have brothers and sisters and need to be adopted together. Through the combined efforts of public and private child welfare agencies, church and civic groups, adoptive parent and advocacy groups, businesses, and the communications media, loving families are being found for these wonderful children.

More and more Americans are also encouraging adoption as the best solution for single women facing crisis pregnancies. Thousands upon thousands of Americans long for children even as more than 4,000 unborn babies perish in our country each day by abortion. As a people we must do more to give all the support we can, during and after pregnancy, to the courageous and compassionate mothers who choose adoption as a means of giving their little ones a lifetime of love with a permanent family.

"Nobody has ever measured, even poets, how much a heart can hold," wrote Zelda Fitzgerald. We do well during this Thanksgiving season to remember that the human heart can hold a great deal indeed. Let us call to mind the children, both here in the United States and in other countries, who need families, and let us honor our adoptive families and the brave people whose sacrifice and selflessness make such families possible.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 306, has designated the week beginning November 23, 1986, as "National Adoption Week" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning November 23, 1986, as National Adoption Week, and I call on all Americans, governmental and private agencies to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

Ronald Reagan