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Last Updated: 05/3/2023



Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, 1983

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

There can be no more precious possession than United States citizenship. As the Columbus, Ohio, *Dispatch* so fittingly stated many years ago:

"In the darkness that has settled over so much of the world and which shadows the existence of men in places where individual liberty still struggles to live, the United States of America has become the source of hope and aid to the millions of oppressed who once knew freedom and the hated enemy of the overlords of darkness who would destroy it wherever they can."

The Constitution provides a framework for our continuous striving to make a better America. It provides the basic balance between each branch of government, limits the power of that government, and guarantees to each of us as citizens our most basic rights. The Constitution, however, is only the outline of our system of government. It is through each individual citizen living out the ideals of the Constitution that we reach for a full expression of those ideals. Therefore, while we celebrate Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, let us rededicate ourselves to a full realization of the potential of the great country which the Founding Fathers struggled to create more than two hundred years ago.

Not only during this week, but throughout the year, we should continue to seek that "more perfect union" which will establish justice and insure domestic tranquility for each of us and our future generations through the Constitution.

In recognition of the importance of our Constitution and the role of our citizenry in shaping our government, the Congress, by joint resolution of February 29, 1952 (36 U.S.C. 153), designated September 17th of each year as Citizenship Day and authorized the President to issue annually a proclamation calling upon officials of the government to display the flag on all government buildings on that day. The Congress also, by joint resolution of August 2, 1956 (36 U.S.C. 159), requested the President to proclaim the week beginning September 17th and ending September 23rd of each year as Constitution Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, call upon appropriate government officials to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings on Citizenship Day, September 17, 1983. I urge Federal, State and local officials, as well as leaders of civic, educational, and religious organizations to conduct ceremonies and programs that day to commemorate the occasion.

I also proclaim the week beginning September 17th and ending September 23rd, 1983 as Constitution Week, and I urge all Americans to observe that week with appropriate ceremonies and activities in their schools, churches and other suitable places.

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

Ronald Reagan