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## Save Your Vision Week, 1985

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

Good vision is a priceless treasure. Our ability to see the print in a book, the beauty of a sunset, and the faces of our loved ones is a gift that should be cherished and protected. Yet each year many Americans lose vision that could have been saved. To halt this tragic waste, we must make more people aware of the steps that all of us can take to safeguard our vision.

Of all sight-saving precautions, the most important is to have regular eye examinations by an eye care professional. Such check-ups are more valuable today than ever before. Thanks to vision research, effective treatment is now available to many people whose sight is threatened by eye disorders. But the greatest medical benefits generally go to those who get the earliest warning of serious eye disease. For them, there may be an opportunity to stop the disease before it has caused significant visual loss.

Middle age is a particularly good time for a person to take advantage of the protection that regular eye examinations can offer. This is because glaucoma, diabetic retinal disease, and several other disorders that are major causes of blindness tend to strike during the middle years of life.

Older Americans, too, should have regular eye check-ups. Cataract, macular disease, and a number of other age-related conditions that can rob elderly people of their vision are detectable by means of a routine eye examination. For many older Americans, learning of the existence of a visual problem is the first step toward obtaining the medical treatment or special visual aids that will allow them to go on leading active, independent lives.

Children also have much to gain from eye examinations. Even very young babies can benefit from discovery of an unsuspected eye problem that should be corrected while the child is still small. Some childhood eye problems, if left untreated, can cause a child to be needlessly handicapped at school and play or even lead to permanent visual loss.

An important concern for people of all ages is protecting the eye from injury. By wearing safety glasses, goggles, or face shields in all hazardous work situations and recreational activities, we can dramatically reduce the toll of visual loss caused by injuries.

There is yet another way for citizens to help improve the eye health of our Nation. Each of us can sign an organ donation card and carry it at all times to insure that after death our eyes are used for vision research and for people who must have a cornea transplant in order to see again.

To encourage people to consider how important their eyesight is and what they can do to preserve it, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 20, 1963 (77 Stat. 629, 36 U.S.C. 169a), has requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as "Save Your Vision Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning March 3, 1985, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all Americans to participate in this observance by making eye care and eye safety an important part of their lives. Also, I invite eye care professionals, the communications media, and all public and private organizations committed to the goal of sight conservation to join in activities that will make Americans more aware of the steps they can take to protect their vision.

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

*Ronald Reagan*