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50th Anniversary Year of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Half a century ago, in 1938, the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act was signed into law by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This legislation was the start of modern food and drug regulation. That this year is the 50th anniversary of that legislation reminds each of us to be grateful for our American legacy of concern for protecting the public health.

The 1938 Act covered cosmetics, medical devices, food additives, and pesticides, but made its strongest impact by giving the Food and Drug Administration the authority and responsibility for approving new drugs for safety before they could be sold. These drug review provisions came just at the beginning of the "first therapeutic revolution," when penicillin and sulfa drugs were being discovered. Wave after wave of new drug classes were discovered in the 1940's and 1950's, and the new drug review system enabled patients and physicians to have a level of confidence in medications that had never before existed.

To this day, the Food and Drug Administration uses the provisions of the 1938 Act, as amended over the years, to establish rigorous standards for food and drug safety that are widely respected and emulated.

The Congress, by House Joint Resolution 600, has recognized the 50th anniversary of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this anniversary.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim 1988 as the 50th Anniversary Year of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, 1988. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this anniversary with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

Ronald Reagan