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## National Family Week, 1988

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

The family, the birth- and dwelling-place of natural and self-sacrificing love, is the first of all social contracts. Rooted in the designs of the Creator and reinforced through the wise devices of the law, the family is the sum of a nation's heritage and the heart of a nation's strength. It is, moreover, the original mirror of mankind's hope for a world founded on bonds of tradition and affection, where the individual is cherished for his unalienable worth, the past revered for its accumulation of knowledge and insight, and the future honored for its power to restore and renew.

With all the diversity of its population, the United States has drawn unmatched strength from the confluence of peoples who value and celebrate the importance of family life. During this particular week, as families gather around the table of thanksgiving, it is especially appropriate that we pause as a Nation to acknowledge the blessings of love and fealty that families confer on their members and, through them, on the larger community.

It is also appropriate that we use this occasion to reflect on the truth that even though the family has proven to be the most durable of all institutions, its vitality is not guaranteed under all conditions. In the past few decades, as a host of new pressures have placed fresh strains on the health of family life in our society, a process of restoration has begun. Policymakers at all levels of government, and leaders in religion and the social sciences, are taking a closer look at the cultural and legal forces undermining the well-being of families. Recognition is at last being given to the fact that no strategy for reducing the tremendous costs of remedial efforts to combat crime and poverty will succeed if we fail to focus first on strengthening the family.

In the years to come, this process of rebuilding must continue. As it does so, we can all take heart in knowing that, to paraphrase a famous epigram, reports of the death of the family have been greatly exaggerated. For as long as the human heart wills to keep for itself a special place of understanding, welcome, and healing—in short, a hearth and a home—the family will endure and prosper.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the week of November 20 through November 26, 1988, as National Family Week, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate programs, gatherings, ceremonies, and other activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth 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*