

Proclamation 7658 of April 1, 2003**National Donate Life Month, 2003**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Advances in medical research and technology are helping our citizens to live longer and better lives. An important aspect of these improvements is transplant technology. Today, up to 50 lives can be saved or enhanced by just one organ and tissue donor. During National Donate Life Month, we honor living and deceased donors and their families across our Nation who have renewed the lives of others, and we call upon more Americans to follow their example.

Through our Nation's organ and tissue donor programs, thousands of Americans have given the gift of life. In 2002, 24,851 organ transplants and 32,744 corneal transplants were performed in the United States. In addition, the National Bone Marrow Donor Registry facilitated an average of 173 transplants each month. These donors' spirit of giving reflects the compassion of our great Nation.

Unfortunately, the current rate of donation is inadequate to meet the growing needs of our fellow Americans. Nearly 81,000 of our citizens are on the national organ transplant waiting list. Each day, an average of 68 of these individuals receive an organ transplant, yet another 17 on the waiting list die. As a Nation, we must strive to meet the needs of all Americans awaiting such donations.

Through the "Gift of Life Donation Initiative," my Administration is working to educate our Nation about the importance of becoming a donor. During National Donate Life Month, more than 6,000 partners, including Federal agencies, State governments, private industries, unions, fraternal organizations, and associations have committed to promoting organ and tissue donation awareness. As a result, millions of Americans will learn about the many ways they can help those in need and save lives.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, 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 April 2003 as National Donate Life Month. I call upon our citizens to sign an organ and tissue donor card and to be screened for bone marrow donation. I also urge healthcare professionals, volunteers, educators, government agencies, and private organizations to help raise awareness of the important need for organ and tissue donors in communities throughout our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this First day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7659 of April 4, 2003**National Crime Victims' Rights Week, 2003**

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Crime brings trauma, pain, and insecurity into the lives of too many Americans each year. As we work to reduce crime and protect the rights of the accused, we must take equal care to protect the rights of their victims. During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we remember those who have suffered as a result of crime and honor those who have helped these victims.

Americans suffered over 24 million crimes in 2001, 5.7 million of which involved violence. While we have improved policies and our justice system has treated victims with greater respect in recent years, we must continue our work to ensure the full rights of all crime victims and better protect our citizens. My Administration believes that victims of violent crime have important rights that deserve protection in our Constitution, and to guarantee these rights, I strongly support the passage of the bipartisan Crime Victims' Rights Amendment. This amendment will provide victims of violent crime the right to reasonable and timely notice of any public proceedings involving the crime or release of the perpetrator, and the right to be heard at public proceedings regarding the criminal's sentence or potential release. It will also assure that such victims receive timely notice of any escape of their attacker. Under this amendment, decision makers will duly consider the victim's safety and payment of restitution from the offender to the victim. This important amendment will strike the right balance in protecting individual rights and ensuring fairness and equity in our criminal justice system.

Across our Nation, victims' rights groups work on behalf of victims every day. Through care and compassion, these groups and individuals are bringing hope and comfort to their neighbors in need. Domestic violence shelters, support groups for families of homicide victims, rape crisis centers, and other organizations in our cities and communities offer vital assistance to individuals who have been affected by crime. In times of such crises, counselors, hotline operators, clergy, doctors, nurses, law enforcement, and countless others also help their fellow Americans cope with their pain and suffering.

As a Nation, we must continue to seek justice on behalf of all people who have been victimized by crime. The heroes in these efforts are the individuals and organizations who work to provide valuable support and assistance to those who have suffered from crime. This week allows us to recognize these heroes and renew our commitment to fulfilling the promise of our Nation of justice for all.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, 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 April 6 through April 12, 2003, as National Crime Victims' Rights Week. I encourage every community to embrace the cause of victims' rights and to advance it in all sectors of our society.