

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 23, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY, 1975

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

The white cane is universally recognized as one of the simplest yet most effective aids to the independent mobility of the blind. Today, as blind persons are participating in the mainstream of active life, the white cane has also become a symbol of their capacity to contribute meaningfully to the progress of all Americans.

One of the most gratifying developments in our efforts to achieve better lives for all Americans is the advancement of social and economic opportunities for blind citizens. This growth is represented by the widening array of jobs capably handled by the blind. Well trained blind persons are working in nearly every trade, profession, and calling. Modern techniques of mobility and the increased use of the white cane have made this possible.

Still, as useful as the white cane is for helping the visually disabled person achieve self-reliance, it has its limitations. It cannot, for instance, warn of an approaching vehicle. Motorists and bicyclists should, therefore, be particularly alert for pedestrians using white canes and respond to their presence with an extra measure of care and caution.

In order that Americans may be made more fully aware of the significance of the white cane, and of the need for motorists and bicyclists to exercise caution and courtesy when approaching visually handicapped persons, the Congress, by joint resolution (78 Stat. 1003; 36 U.S.C. 169d), has authorized the President to proclaim October 15 of each year as White Cane Safety Day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Wednesday, October 15, 1975, as White Cane Safety Day. I call upon all Americans to exercise understanding and awareness of the special needs of our fellow citizens who are visually handicapped in order that they may enjoy the greatest possible measure of personal independence and safety as they use our streets and public facilities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this **twenty-third** day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred ninety-ninth.

GERALD R. FORD

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