

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 13, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP DAY AND CONSTITUTION WEEK, 1976

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
A PROCLAMATION

With the signing of the United States Constitution on September 17, 1787, the founding fathers approved for the people of this Nation an effective plan of self-government, which has, with its subsequent amendments -- including the Bill of Rights -- preserved the principles of the Declaration of Independence. It is the responsibility of the citizens of the United States to uphold, support and defend those ideals.

An understanding and appreciation of the events and hardships which produced that great document is indispensable to a rededication to the preservation of its ideals.

To that end, the Congress, by a joint resolution of February 29, 1952 (36 U.S.C. 153), designated September 17 as Citizenship Day, in commemoration of the formation and signing of the Constitution of the United States on September 17, 1787, and authorized the President to issue annually a proclamation calling upon officials of the Government to display the flag on all Government buildings on that day. By a joint resolution of August 2, 1956 (36 U.S.C. 159), Congress authorized the President to designate the period beginning September 17 and ending September 23 of each year as Constitution Week and to issue a proclamation calling for the observance of that week.

The commemoration during the year 1976 assumes special significance, because it also marks the Bicentennial anniversary of the founding on July 4, 1776, of our country as an independent Nation. This is a time for reflection upon our history and upon our future, and a time for commitment to the goals that have made America great.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, call upon appropriate Government officials to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on Citizenship Day, September 17, 1976. I urge Federal, State and local officials, as well as leaders of all religious, civic, educational and other organizations, to conduct meaningful ceremonies and observances on that day to commemorate the formation and signing of the Constitution and to extend recognition to those persons who during the year acquired the status of citizenship, either by coming of age or by naturalization.

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I also designate the period beginning September 17 and ending September 23, 1976, as Constitution Week, and I urge the people of the United States to observe that week with appropriate ceremonies and activities in their schools and churches and in other suitable places, to the end that our citizens may have a better understanding of the Constitution and of the rights and responsibilities of United States citizenship.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this **thirteenth** day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and seventy-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and first.

GERALD R. FORD

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