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*Last Updated: 05/3/2023*



## Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, 1982

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

Chief Justice John Marshall wrote, "the people make the Constitution, and the people can unmake it. It is the creature of their own will, and lives only by their will." It is appropriate, therefore, that we set aside September 17, 1982, the 195th anniversary of the Constitution, to celebrate Citizenship Day and to begin Constitution Week.

The Constitution provides the structure of our federal system and a system of checks and balances that applies equally to each branch of government, to relations between the states and the Federal Government, and, as importantly, to each of us. It protects the rights of all Americans to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" and limits governmental authority to ensure these liberties are faithfully protected—both by and from the state.

But in the end it is each citizen who is responsible for protecting the liberties set forth in the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Therefore, while Citizenship Day is a day of celebration, it is also a day of remembrance and dedication. This is particularly so in view of this time in our history. Two hundred years ago, with freedom assured by victory at the Battle of Yorktown, our forefathers began the process culminating in the adoption of the Constitution on September 17, 1787.

On this day and throughout this week, we should reaffirm our commitment to this "compact" which gives "stability to the present and certainty to the future." And, as we approach the 200th anniversary of the Constitution, we must remember that an active and informed citizenry is not just a right; it is an obligation.

In recognition of the place the Constitution holds in our Nation, and the paramount role our citizens play in maintaining the United States, the Congress, by joint resolution on February 29, 1952 (36 U.S.C. 153), designated September 17th as Citizenship Day, and by joint resolution of August 2, 1956 (36 U.S.C. 159), requested the President to proclaim the week beginning September 17th and ending September 23rd of each year as Constitution Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, 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, 1982. I urge Federal, State and local officials, as well as leaders of civic, educational and religious organizations to conduct ceremonies and programs that day to commemorate the occasion.

I also proclaim the week beginning September 17th, 1982 as Constitution Week, and I urge all Americans to observe that week with programs that stress the importance of the Constitution to our individual freedoms and form of government. I call upon all citizens to join in studying the events and documents surrounding the adoption of our Constitution in 1787 so that its bicentennial may be celebrated with renewed learning of the history and purpose of this Charter of Freedom.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 23rd day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixth.

*Ronald Reagan*