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National Patriotism Week, 1982

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

National Patriotism Week affords all Americans a special opportunity to consider the meaning of an honorable term which has sometimes been misunderstood and misused.

True patriotism is a love of country, but it must be an intelligent love and not blind devotion to one's nation without regard to its ideals. Abraham Lincoln recognized this when, speaking in tribute of Henry Clay, he said:

"He loved his country partly because it was his own country, but mostly because it was a free country; and he burned with a zeal for its advancement, prosperity and glory, because he saw in such, the advancement, prosperity and glory, of human liberty, human right, and human nature."

The patriotism of Clay, Lincoln, and generations of Americans was of this nature. They loved their country because it was theirs but even more because it was a land where liberty, justice, and opportunity flourished. They did not love it because of its government but because of its people; not because of the role its government played in world affairs but because of the inspiration the very idea of America gave to every person, great and small, who made this blessed land his home, and to every person in the less fortunate lands of the world who, amid oppression, tyranny, and injustice—as in Poland today—looked to America as the land of freedom.

Americans today should dedicate themselves again to that true patriotism. We should dedicate ourselves again to the enduring values of family, neighborhood, work, peace, and freedom which have characterized our country these past two centuries. Let us do this, and our patriotism will be strong and fulfilling.

The Congress, by joint resolution (S.J. Res. 34), designated the week commencing with the third Monday in February of 1982 as "National Patriotism Week" and requested the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to commemorate that week with appropriate celebrations and observances.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning February 15, 1982, as National Patriotism Week.

I invite all primary and secondary schools to conduct programs of study which are dedicated to those bedrock principles of national greatness devoted to rekindling the patriotic flame in all Americans.

I call upon all citizens of the United States of America to commemorate National Patriotism Week with appropriate celebrations and observances.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of February, 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