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## National Down Syndrome Month, 1986

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

Down Syndrome is the most common genetic birth defect associated with mental handicap. Approximately one in 800 babies is born with Down Syndrome.

Over the last decade, Americans have become more aware of the accomplishments and the potential of developmentally disabled people, particularly those with Down Syndrome, thanks to the efforts of concerned physicians, teachers, and parents' groups such as the National Down Syndrome Congress and the National Down Syndrome Society.

As a result, we have programs to educate new parents of babies with Down Syndrome, special education classes within mainstreamed programs in schools, vocational training for competitive employment in the work force, and preparation for young adults with Down Syndrome for independent living in the community.

Paralleling these improvements in educational opportunities are advances in medical treatment that are enhancing the outlook for those born with this condition. In addition, the public is showing increased acceptance of people with Down Syndrome. We must continue our efforts to dispel myths about Down Syndrome and the degree to which it is disabling.

Because we live, regrettably, in an age when some people no longer value every human life regardless of condition, we must be vigilant in recalling that "all men are created equal" and that people with Down Syndrome have the same rights to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" that we all do. We have a duty to see that they receive all the help they need, before birth, in the nursery, and throughout life. Our heritage as Americans bids us do no less.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 321, has designated the month of October 1986 as "National Down Syndrome Month" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of October 1986 as National Down Syndrome Month. I invite all concerned citizens, agencies, and organizations to unite during October with appropriate observances and activities directed toward assisting affected individuals and their families to enjoy to the fullest the blessings of life.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

*Ronald Reagan*