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Older Americans Month, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Celebration of Older Americans Month summons us as individuals and as a Nation to careful reflection on our attitudes toward and treatment of those of us who are elderly.

If we answer this summons, the need for commensurate action will be apparent to us. Senior citizens merit our express appreciation for their countless, invaluable contributions, past and present, to our Nation. They deserve as well our best efforts to avoid and to dispel false ideas about aging. This requires all of us to become more willing to familiarize ourselves with the many ways older people continue to achieve in every area of endeavor as they begin second careers, further their educations, and voluntarily serve their neighbors both at home and abroad. We can also resolve to lend our support as the private sector and public agencies help senior citizens maintain independence and as State and Area Agencies on Aging work with community leaders and groups to create responsive service systems for older Americans.

By every indication, those systems are working well, as is the overall economy whose growth and vitality are necessary for these systems to function as they are designed. The Social Security system, which began the decade in desperate straits, has been rescued and is on solid ground as we near the end of the '80s. Reform of the tax code has brought relief to many elderly taxpayers, and up to a quarter of all of these citizens will pay no Federal income tax whatsoever. The poverty rate among the elderly has been reduced to the lowest level in our history.

The true wealth of our older Americans—some 30 million men and women over the age of 65 whose life expectancy continues to grow—lies in the wisdom and experience they have to offer succeeding generations. We are wise ourselves to tap that accumulation of knowledge and good judgment and to pay the tribute of close attention to our venerable fellow citizens, the prime architects of the peace, freedom, and prosperity that are our present blessing and future hope.

The Congress, by House Joint Resolution 508, has recognized the month of May 1988 as "Older Americans Month" and has requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 1988 as Older Americans Month. I call upon the American people to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

Ronald Reagan