

rights and fundamental responsibilities of citizenship: the right to vote. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 helped ensure that all citizens would have the opportunity to vote, regardless of race. As President Lyndon Johnson said when he signed the Act, “Millions of Americans are denied the right to vote because of their color. This law will ensure them the right to vote. The wrong is one which no American, in his heart, can justify. The right is one which no American, true to our principles, can deny.”; As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of this historic act, we reaffirm this bedrock commitment to equality and justice for all.

America’s history is a story of people working for freedom, justice, and equality. We have made great progress toward achieving these ideals. In the middle of the 20th century, the conscience of America was awakened by the struggles and the courage of those who overcame racial slurs, fire hoses, and burning crosses. Brave men and women held sit-ins at lunch counters, rode buses on Freedom Rides, and marched in our Nation’s Capital and throughout our country to demand the full promise of the Declaration of Independence. The work of these courageous Americans led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and we remember their heroism on this anniversary.

America is a stronger and better Nation because of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. As President Johnson said upon signing the Act, it is “a triumph for freedom as huge as any victory that has ever been won on any battlefield.”; The Act was a great step forward in the history of our Nation, and it remains essential as we continue our progress toward a society in which every person of every background can realize the American Dream.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim August 6, 2005, as a day of celebration in honor of the 40th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7917 of August 15, 2005

National Airborne Day, 2005

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Americans live in freedom because of the extraordinary bravery, sacrifice, and dedication to duty of the members of our Armed Forces. From the first official Army parachute jump 65 years ago, our country’s Airborne troops have played a crucial role in the defense of our Nation and our liberty. On National Airborne Day, we pay special tribute to these courageous soldiers who served with honor and integrity.

On August 16, 1940, the successful first jump of the Army Parachute Test Platoon laid the foundation for a new and innovative method of combat that helped contribute to an Allied victory in World War II. These bold pioneers answered the call of duty and set an example for future generations to follow. Since the designation of the Army's first Airborne division, the 82nd Airborne, on August 15, 1942, our Airborne troops have performed with valor. The brave men and women of our Airborne forces have worked to defeat tyranny, advance the cause of liberty, and build a safer world.

Today a new generation of Airborne forces is fighting a war against an enemy that threatens the peace and stability of the world. At this critical time, Airborne forces of the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force are continuing the noble tradition of the first sky soldiers. Americans are grateful for the service of our Airborne forces and all our troops, and we are inspired by the strength and sacrifice of our military members and their families.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim August 16, 2005, as National Airborne Day. I encourage all Americans to honor those who have served in the Airborne forces, and I also call upon all citizens to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7918 of August 25, 2005

Women's Equality Day, 2005

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was adopted, guaranteeing American women the right to vote. The passage of this amendment was the culmination of a long struggle that reached back to the founding of the country and was furthered by the 1848 women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. By celebrating Women's Equality Day, we commemorate the adoption of this amendment and honor the visionary women who fought tirelessly for women's suffrage.

Led by women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucretia Mott, the suffragists stood up against injustice and persevered until, as Susan B. Anthony wrote, the handful who first took a stand for suffrage grew into an army. The efforts of these pioneers helped secure for American women the right to vote.

Since the adoption of the 19th Amendment, women have continued to make great contributions to our Nation. Women today are leaders in