

America. I presented plans to the Congress to close that gap. We want more people owning and managing their own retirement accounts and their own health care plans. We want more people owning their own small business in America, because this administration understands that when a person owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of our country.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another, respect their point of view, respect their religious beliefs, and take responsibility for the decisions they make. The culture of America is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a new day, a culture in which each of us understands that we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for heeding a universal call to love a neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

The culture of service is strong in America. People are responding to the call to serve their country. I started what's called the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to a neighbor in need. The response has been strong. People are serving their Nation by supporting charities, faith-based groups, neighborhood healers that are changing America one life at a time. Policemen and firefighters and the people who wear our Nation's uniform remind us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than ourselves. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 3 years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace.

We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves.

Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

Thank you for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. at the Hanover Marriott. In his remarks, he referred to Christine Todd Whitman, former Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency.

Statement on Signing the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2004

December 1, 2003

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 2754, the "Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2004." The Act funds programs of the Department of Energy, the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and several other agencies, and provides funds to help protect the Nation's environment.

The executive branch shall construe provisions of the Act that direct the Secretary of a military department to perform the Secretary's duties through a particular military officer in a manner consistent with the statutory authority of the Secretary of Defense to exercise authority, direction, and control of the Department of Defense and the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and as Commander in Chief.

Provisions in sections 209 and 303 and under the heading "Construction, General" in title I purport to require the approval of committees of the Congress before executive branch execution of aspects of the Act or to preclude executive branch execution of a provision of the Act upon the written disapproval of such a committee. The executive branch shall construe such provisions to require only notification to the Congress, as any other construction would contravene the

constitutional principles set forth by the Supreme Court in *INS v. Chadha*.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 1, 2003.

NOTE: H.R. 2754, approved December 1, was assigned Public Law No. 108-137.

Proclamation 7740—World AIDS Day, 2003

December 1, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The HIV/AIDS pandemic presents one of the greatest medical and social challenges of our time. On World AIDS Day, members of the global community come together to demonstrate our shared commitment to turning the tide against the spread of HIV/AIDS, bringing hope and healing to those who are suffering, and finding a cure.

Over the last two decades, AIDS has claimed the lives of more than 20 million people. Three million have died in the last year alone. Today, more than 40 million people are living with HIV, including nearly 30 million in Africa. Behind these staggering numbers are the names and faces of orphaned and suffering children, devastated communities, and a continent in crisis.

In my State of the Union Message to the Congress in January of this year, I announced an “Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief,” with a goal of helping millions around the world affected by HIV/AIDS, particularly those in the most afflicted nations in Africa and the Caribbean. In May, the Congress responded by passing the “United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003,” which I signed into law. A life-saving initiative, the Act commits \$15 billion over the next 5 years to prevent 7 million new HIV infections, treat at least 2 million people with life-extending drugs, provide care for at least 10 million people affected by AIDS, continue bilateral programs in over 75 countries, and increase support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis,

and Malaria. This work of mercy will help overcome fear, stigma, and discrimination and create a cycle of hope and promise that will benefit millions.

Here at home, we will spend more than \$15 billion this year to combat AIDS in America. This money will support research activities, care and treatment services, and prevention programs, including the wide availability of rapid HIV testing.

Fighting HIV/AIDS is not only a great challenge but also a moral imperative for those who believe in the value and dignity of every human life. This World AIDS Day, the United States remains committed to taking action, showing compassion, and bringing hope to those affected by HIV/AIDS around the world.

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 December 1, 2003, as World AIDS Day. I urge the Governors of the States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of the other territories subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combating HIV/AIDS. I encourage all Americans to participate in appropriate commemorative programs and ceremonies in houses of worship, workplaces, and other community centers to remember those who have lost their lives to this deadly disease and to comfort and support those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 3, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 4.