

Proclamation 5537

Ronald Reagan



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By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

Drug abuse is a veritable plague that enslaves its victims, saps their health, turns their dreams to dust, and endangers their lives and the lives of others. Unchecked, it poses a threat to our Nation. But Americans are fighting back against this insidious evil. More and more young people are choosing to "Just Say No" to drugs. This heartening development is due to the tireless efforts of concerned parents, private sector organizations, schools, and State and Federal government.

We cannot afford to slacken in our efforts when nearly two-thirds of all American teenagers have used an illicit drug at least once before they finish high school. Especially disturbing is the level of cocaine use among teenagers and young adults in our country.

Cocaine is especially dangerous because people tend to underestimate its harmful effects. Cocaine must be recognized for what it is: a dangerous, addictive drug. Cocaine can kill: deaths from respiratory and cardiac arrest from cocaine overdose are increasing among all age groups. Recently there has been a frightening upsurge in the use of "crack," a form of cocaine that is smoked. "Crack" reaches the brain within seconds, producing a sudden and intense

high and a fierce craving to use it again and again, a phenomenon that has been called "instant addiction."

The most effective weapon we have against drug abuse is to dry up demand by spreading knowledge about its ruinous effects. Across the country, individuals and organizations have discovered the power of united action. The "peer pressure" that so often has been used to snare the unwary into "experimenting" with drugs is now being used to build resistance. Youth-led groups are in the forefront of our national crusade to rid our country of this evil. The vigorous action of parents, religious and community leaders, teachers, doctors, counselors, and young people themselves with their commitment of time, energy, and love, has been an inspiration to all of us. Public education media campaigns have also been effective in motivating people to "Just Say No." A major portion of the Federal drug abuse prevention effort is directed toward continued research into the deleterious effects of drugs and getting this information out to those who can use it most effectively.

Our society at every level must develop an absolute intolerance for illegal drugs. Everyone has a part to play in this crusade: parents, teachers, health care professionals, youth workers, and celebrities in entertainment, sports, and other fields. All America must speak with one voice. We must teach our young people to say "no" to the degradation of drugs and "yes" to the bright promise of a drug-free America. This is a battle for liberty from the enslavement of

drug addiction. We can win. We must win. With God's help and a united people, we shall win.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolutions 354 and 386, has designated the week of October 5 through October 11, 1986, as "National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week," and October 6, 1986, as "National Drug Abuse Education Day," and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of these events.

Now, Therefore, I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of October 5 through October 11, 1986, as National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week, and October 6, 1986, as National Drug Abuse Education Day. I call upon the people of the United States to participate in drug abuse education and prevention programs in their communities. I encourage parents and children to talk and work together to prevent drug abuse in the family and to dedicate themselves to the goal of a drug-free America.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 6th day of Oct., 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

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 4:16 p.m.,
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