

## America's Promise Summit Declaration

In April 1997, Presidents Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush and Clinton – joined by Mrs. Reagan, representing her husband – came together on the steps of Independence Hall in Philadelphia to renew the fundamental promise of America: that all children, regardless of the circumstances of their birth, should have the opportunity to make the most of their full potential. In 2001, President George W. Bush added his signature to the charter. Today, I am proud to do the same. And I ask my Administration, and all Americans, to join me in embracing:

### The Presidents' Summit Declaration

Two centuries ago, America was founded on the proposition that just as all people are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights, citizenship entails undeniable responsibilities. As each of us has the right to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, each of us has an obligation to give something back to country and community ~ a duty to take responsibility not just for ourselves and our families, but for one another. We owe a debt of service to fulfill the God-given promise of America, and our children.

In this time of opportunity ~ at the dawn of a new century and a new Millennium ~ the need for shared responsibility is self-evident.

The challenges of today, especially those that confront our children, require a special commitment of us all. People of all ages and from all walks of life must claim society's problems as their own, pulling together, leading by example, and lifting American lives.

Our obligation, distinct and unmistakable, is to assure that all young Americans have

Caring adults in their lives, as parents, mentors, tutors, coaches  
Safe places with structured activities in which to learn and grow  
A healthy start and healthy future  
An effective education that equips them with marketable skills  
An opportunity to give back to their communities through their own service

As Americans and as Presidents, we ask every caring citizen to pledge individual commitments of citizen service, voluntary action, the efforts of their organizations, or commitments to individual children in need. By doing so, this Nation pledges the fulfillment of America's promise for every American child.

### The Presidents of the United States of America

Gerald R. Ford James Earl Carter Ronald W. Reagan George H.W. Bush William Jefferson Clinton  
Signed by Mrs. Nancy Reagan

Originally signed, Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 28, 1997  
Signed and endorsed by President George W. Bush, The White House, July 9, 2001

In signing this Declaration, I renew my commitment to the basic bargain that built this country – the idea that if you work hard and meet your responsibilities, you can get ahead, no matter where you come from, what you look like, where you pray, or who you love. And I ask all Americans to join me in affirming that fundamental promise and ensuring that it holds for all our children and for future generations, so that the American Dream that has lit the world for centuries will never die.

**Barack Obama**  
**President of the United States**



The White House  
September 22, 2014