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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Each year, people across the globe take time to recognize the millions of people living on the autism spectrum, including 1 out of every 68 American children. Americans with autism contribute to all aspects of society and are an essential thread in the diverse tapestry of our Nation. On World Autism Awareness Day, we offer our support and respect to all those on the autism spectrum.

Because our whole Nation benefits when Americans with autism succeed, we must ensure our health care and education systems work for them. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, insurers can no longer deny coverage to people because they have autism, and new plans must cover preventive services -- including autism and developmental screenings -- at no out-of-pocket cost to parents. My Administration remains committed to eliminating discrimination against students with autism and to giving schools the resources to help them hone unique talents, overcome difficult challenges, and prepare for bright futures.

We must also do more to improve our understanding of the autism spectrum, which is why I was proud to sign legislation that continued critical investments in research, early detection, and support services for children and adults with autism. Last year, I launched the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative, a program that aims to revolutionize our understanding of the human mind. By unlocking new knowledge of the brain, we can pave the way for myriad medical breakthroughs, including a greater appreciation for the science of autism.

What makes America exceptional are the bonds that hold together the most diverse Nation on earth. Today, let us celebrate our differences -- but let us also acknowledge our responsibilities to each other and move forward as one.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2, 2014, World Autism Awareness Day. I encourage all Americans to learn more about autism and what they can do to support individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand fourteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-eighth.

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