



December 7, 2022

President Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Association for the Advancement of Blood and Biotherapies (AABB), America's Blood Centers, and the American Red Cross are writing to request that you consider two outreach actions during National Blood Donor Month in January to urge all Americans to donate blood, including: (1) issuing a presidential proclamation; and (2) illuminating the White House in red to highlight the importance of blood donation.

Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. Millions of patients rely on this critical resource to manage countless medical challenges such as trauma, cancer, and sickle cell disease and it can only come from willing donors. Our organizations represent the entire transfusion medicine community, and we are grateful for the support we have received from your Administration to promote the critical need for blood. However, the challenges of recruiting and retaining blood donors are significant. Only three percent of Americans donate each year and the COVID-19 pandemic has further strained our efforts.

It would be enormously beneficial to our nation's health care system to have your further assistance in raising awareness of the continuous need for blood. First, we request that you issue a presidential proclamation declaring January to be National Blood Donor Month. While National Blood Donor Month is widely celebrated each year, it has been nearly 50 years since the last such presidential proclamation. A renewed call from the highest level would be a valuable educational tool to Americans about why donating blood is an important act of public service that will help their communities and our nation.

Such a proclamation would help America's blood donation community at a critical time. It is expected that most centers will have just one- or two-days' worth of blood available during the month of January, a time of critical need. We are submitting suggested proclamation language for your review.

We also ask that the White House be illuminated in red during January to call attention to the tremendous need for blood donations. On multiple occasions, the illuminating of the Executive Mansion in colors meaningful to events and commemorations has garnered significant attention. In the ongoing effort to encourage blood donations, we believe the lighting of the White House in red will motivate people to learn more and commit to donating blood.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and for all your Administration has done to promote the need for blood. We look forward to working with you to ensure that people across the nation continue to have access to a safe and robust supply of this life-saving resource.

Sincerely,

Debra BenAvram
Chief Executive Officer
AABB

Kate Fry
Chief Executive Officer
America's Blood Centers

J. Chris Hrouda
President, Biomedical Services
American Red Cross

PROPOSED PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION – NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR MONTH

This National Blood Donor Month, we recognize and celebrate the more than 7 million generous individuals who roll up a sleeve each year to donate blood for patients in need across the country. For those we can help save, we recommit this January to continue this act of caring for one another through blood donation.

One in 7 people entering a hospital today will need a blood transfusion. That person may be a family member battling cancer, a car accident victim, a parent experiencing a difficult childbirth, or a patient with sickle cell disease. Blood is unique among other important treatments in that it cannot be manufactured. There is only one source: volunteer blood donors.

Unfortunately, the number of Americans who donate blood each year is declining. The COVID-19 pandemic further strained our nation's blood supply, since many school and workplace-based blood drives were shuttered during the pandemic, and many have not resumed.

This year, my Administration launched a national public awareness campaign, Giving = Living, to increase awareness of the importance of donating blood and to encourage Americans to donate regularly. Congress recognized the urgency of initiative when it passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act with a bipartisan vote. I am also proud to ensure that our nation's blood donation policy is based on science and not stigma. The Food and Drug Administration supports the ongoing ADVANCE Study as we seek to make blood donation a more inclusive process while maintaining the safety of the blood supply.

To help address health inequities that have persisted for too long in our country, we especially need more donors from diverse communities to ensure compatible blood products will always be available to all patients in need. This is particularly important for patients whose care may require frequent blood transfusions, such as those with sickle cell disease, the most common inherited blood disorder in the U.S., mostly affecting those of African descent. One in 3 African American blood donors are a match for people with sickle cell disease which is why their donations are so critical to improving health outcomes for those battling this enduring – and often invisible – disease.

Giving blood is not a matter that divides us but rather a matter that defines us. It personifies our American spirit – to act with compassion and become a hero for a stranger in need. Let us give so that others may live and together, we will build a stronger, more hopeful tomorrow for the people of our great Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR., 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 January 2023 as National Blood Donor Month. I call on the people of the United States of America to donate blood to help their fellow citizens if eligible. I encourage all Americans to visit hhs.gov/givingequalsliving for information about blood donation and to find a location to give.

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