



## National Job Skills Week, 1989

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

The observance of National Job Skills Week, 1989, gives all Americans an opportunity to reflect on the changes taking place in our economy and work force. Today, the United States continues to hold a position of leadership in global economic affairs—with most Americans enjoying a high standard of living, employment levels continuing to increase, and unemployment falling to the lowest levels in more than a decade. In large part, this leadership reflects the flexibility, creativity, and commitment to excellence among American workers and employers, as well as the quality of our educational and training institutions.

However, the United States faces a serious challenge that must be dealt with immediately and directly. An increasingly competitive international economy requires that our labor force have improved skills—skills necessary to adapt to technological advances in the workplace.

At the same time, demographic changes are altering the composition of our labor force. Trends indicate that, during the next decade, fewer new young workers will be entering the labor market, and the average age of the work force will rise significantly. Workers without adequate education or training will likely make up a larger share of the entrants into the work force. These trends underscore the importance of providing retraining for older workers and employment opportunities for those Americans who, in the past, have not been able to compete in the labor market due to lack of education or occupational skills.

We must reaffirm our commitment to bringing disadvantaged and unemployed Americans into the labor market so that they, too, can experience the rewards of productive employment and self-sufficiency. Such a commitment is not only a moral imperative, but also vital to maintaining our Nation's prosperity and economic growth.

The centerpiece of the Federal Government's efforts to meet this challenge and commitment is the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Through the JTPA, private and governmental efforts are combined to provide needed training and assistance to individuals seeking private sector employment. The JTPA has been an extremely successful program, but it can be improved. Amendments under consideration would target assistance and training to those who face the most serious barriers to employment; enhance the quality of services provided; and promote coordination of human resource programs serving the disadvantaged.

In addition, the Family Support Act of 1988—last year's landmark welfare reform legislation—moves us in the direction of including job training and education in our welfare system. Similarly, proposed changes to the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, now being considered, would emphasize student achievement in acquiring basic skills and occupational competence. Effective implementation of these programs can make a critical contribution to our efforts to train unskilled and disadvantaged Americans and bring them into the economic mainstream.

To focus national attention on present and future work force needs, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 148, has designated the week of October 8 through October 14, 1989, as "National Job Skills Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of October 8 through October 14, 1989, as National Job Skills Week. I urge all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "George Bush".