

With the support of area residents, the Cheshire Lions Club has reached out to assist many members of the community. The Lions Club has developed a national reputation for advancing such worthwhile local causes as the D.A.R.E. Program for schools, academic scholarships for local students, and area food banks, and the Cheshire club has been an important part of that legacy. Over the years, members of the Cheshire Lions Club have actively involved themselves in countless civic activities and made a real difference in Connecticut. Their hard work has reached far beyond the Town of Cheshire and the Lions Club stands tall as an example of the principles upon which our nation was built.

As the Cheshire Lions Club has grown, its numerous good works have touched many lives and demonstrated the true value of community spirit. I ask that my colleagues join me in thanking the club and all its members for their service, dedication, and contributions to our state. ●

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF "WOMEN HELPING BATTERED WOMEN"

● Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to stand before the Senate today and speak of an organization that has, for the past 25 years, been committed to ending violence toward women and children. The organization is called Women Helping Battered Women (WHBW) and their goal is simple: create a living environment for women and children that is free from fear of battering—sexual, physical, emotional or financial. On the occasion of their 25th anniversary, WHBW, through their direct service, their advocacy and their educational and outreach programs stands as an example for us all and, unfortunately, are as crucial today as they were 25 years ago.

We must not shy away from the impacts of domestic violence. In the United States, a woman is battered by a partner every seven seconds and thirty percent of Americans know a woman who has been physically abused by their husband or boyfriend in the last year. In my home state of Vermont, I shudder when I hear that domestic violence touches over 16,000 Vermonters each year. In Chittenden County alone, an overwhelming 59% of all reported crimes since January 1998 have been domestic-related disturbances. We often perceive Vermont as one of the safest states in the nation, however, the incidence of domestic violence in Vermont continues to rise.

As a result of WHBW's work, over 3,500 Vermonters' lives were positively touched during difficult and dangerous times in their lives. I'd like to highlight their PARADIGM project, a joint educational partnership with the Woman's Rape Crisis Center. The PARADIGM project serves to educate students, churches and professional and

community groups, in the hope of breaking the cycle of violence in the home and in our communities.

Mr. President, you may see me and others wearing a purple ribbon, to symbolize our commitment to ending violence against women and children in our state, and across the nation. Yet it is the day to day work of Women Helping Battered Women—it is their strength and advocacy—that continues to make a difference and helps Congress focus on this issue. Congress made a commitment to the women behind the statistics when we passed the bipartisan Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). I will continue to work to fulfill this pledge to millions of women and families who have suffered, by fully funding this important Act which supports shelters, counseling, training, and law enforcement. In fact, my work helped to double the fiscal year 1997 allocations for community level demonstration projects and to increase the domestic violence hotline funds. Congress also included funding targeted exclusively to combat domestic violence in rural areas—especially important in my home state of Vermont. We must continue the work we began with the passage of VAWA and pass a reauthorization of these vital programs. I am proud to be a cosponsor of S. 51, the Violence Against Women Act II. I pledge to work with my colleagues to get this needed legislation passed in the near future.

I applaud WHBW's leadership and the creative initiatives they have undertaken to build and maintain a multicultural organization which empowers staff, volunteers, and the women and families they serve. I commend Woman Helping Battered Women for their crucial work in breaking the silence for victims, supporting women and children in meeting their most basic needs in times of great difficulty, educating our communities, and working to heighten public awareness of this growing epidemic.

Mr. President, thank you for the opportunity to provide my colleagues with a shining example of a group of dedicated individuals actively engaged in the war against domestic violence. I join other Vermonters in offering my heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to Women Helping Battered Women for their many years of good work. ●

COMMEMORATING THE AGREE- MENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SISTER RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STATE OF MONTANA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND GUANGXI ZHUANG AUTONO- MUS REGION, PEOPLE'S REPUB- LIC OF CHINA

● Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the establishment of the sister-state relationship between my home state of Montana and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China.

The establishment of this sisterhood marks a successful conclusion to many

years of building mutual cooperation, trust and friendship, as well as a bright beginning of a continued strong relationship between our countries.

I would like to commend Governor Marc Racicot of the State of Montana for his continued efforts to bring new opportunities to the state through education, business relations and cultural exchanges. I would also like to thank the People's Republic of China and Governor Li Zhaozhao for linking Guangxi Province to Montana. The richness of culture, citizens, history, and boundless environmental beauty make our state and your province a perfect match.

Montana and Guangxi have worked a long time in building this relationship. In fact, a high level delegation from Guangxi Province joined the first Mansfield Pacific Retreat on "Trade and Agriculture," held in Bigfork, Montana, in May 1996.

The idea of establishing friendly exchange relationships between American states and cities and Chinese provinces and cities goes back to the late 1970s when China, as a country, began to "open up to the outside." These sister relationships have proved to be very helpful in establishing cultural and grassroots relations. A good example is the product relationship between the city of Seattle and Chongqing in Sichuan Province.

The establishment of Montana's sister ties with Guangxi Province in South China fits within this tradition of promoting people to people communication. Such a relationship is especially relevant to Montana because of the life, work, and legacy of Mike Mansfield. He is Montana's "favorite son" who has also made a name known for himself in China. His promotion of sister relationships with Asia began during his tenure as American Ambassador to Japan. He proposed and helped to establish Montana's sister relationship with Kumamoto Prefecture. He also established the University of Montana's sister relations with Toyo University in Tokyo and Kumamoto University in Kumamoto City.

Although Senator Mansfield is better known for his promotion of mutual understanding with Japan, his impact on American Chinese relations is also significant. His interest in East Asia began when he served in the U.S. Marines soon after World War I and visited the American Garrison then in the city of Tianjin.

Senator Mansfield continued his work in the Far East as a Congressman from Montana. He visited China at the request of President Roosevelt to report back with advice on American policy following the defeat of Japan in the Pacific War. He is also credited with opening relations with China in the early 1970s and he was the first American Senator to visit China, soon after President Nixon's historic visit in 1972. The current ties between Montana and Guangxi are a fitting expression of the value of people to people communication between America and China. They