

years. I want to work with my colleagues to help counties expedite their transitions and feel that the first step is to address how much funding is associated with the reauthorization.

With the beginning of the next Congress, I will encourage my colleagues to recall why we are working on this reauthorization, the relationship between our public lands, schools, and counties. And I will be asking for their commitment in working in a bipartisan fashion to address this critical issue expeditiously.

RECOGNIZING THE DC COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise to reflect on the contributions that the DC Commission for Women has made to the lives of the disenfranchised in our Nation's Capital. Of particular note has been the commission's focus on homeless women and children who are often forgotten and neglected in the District of Columbia.

I am particularly pleased that the commission will serve as a partner in the "big read" program, sponsored by the national endowment for the arts. This program provides books for low-income "at-risk" children. The DC Commission for Women is also a national model for educating the public on domestic violence prevention and women's health and safety issues.

My remarks are coming on the eve of Mayor Anthony Williams' transition from public service into private life. It is befitting that the commission is paying tribute to Mayor Williams' mother, Virginia E. Hayes Williams, a member of the commission and a strong advocate for children and women. It is not coincidental that the tribute will be held at the Saint Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church for Mrs. Williams, like Constantine the Great's mother, Helen, advised her son on religion and affairs of the state.

I would also like to acknowledge the commission's chair, Dr. Christine M. Warnke, whose leadership has brought international resources and visibility to the commission. She has expanded the commission's programs and forged global partnerships which promote religious and cultural tolerance.

As we move into the 110th Congress, I look forward to working with the Commission for Women on these important issues.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOICE OF AMERICA

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, as the people of Serbia approach a critical national election on January 21, 2007, I pay tribute to the journalists and broadcasters who have worked to provide an antidote to forces of extremism in the country. I especially congratu-

late the Voice of America's Serbian Service and recognize the 10-year anniversary of its first television broadcast. VOA's long-running work in Serbia has played a valuable role in the country's evolution and provided an important source of information during the darkest periods of Serb history. This contribution has been particularly evident as Serbia has undergone profound changes in the last 10 years.

Open Studio, VOA's first daily television newscast, was launched on December 11, 1996, in the wake of massive demonstrations to protest the invalidation of election victories by opponents of Slobodan Milosevic. In the face of public outcry, the Milosevic regime worked quickly to silence independent media outlets in Serbia, including a small, vibrant radio station called B92. The student-run station had distinguished itself by broadcasting hard news about the wars in the former Yugoslavia and engaging in relentless criticism of the Government. VOA's Serbian Service responded to the Milosevic regime's attacks on media freedom by expanding its broadcast and providing extensive reports on the international reaction to the protests in Serbia. On the day Serb authorities finally shut down B92, VOA requested permission to help the station reach its audience via VOA radio waves. As a result, VOA Serbian launched a media solidarity project and began broadcasting reports prepared by B92 stringers. The solidarity project received widespread international attention, including press coverage by the New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, and many other respected media outlets.

After VOA began providing assistance to B92, the Milosevic Government relented and permitted the station's radio service to resume broadcasting. B92's chief editor, Veran Matic, credited VOA's assistance and international pressure on the Milosevic Government with getting his station back on the air. B92 quickly became a symbol of freedom and resistance to ultranationalism during the balance of the Milosevic era. Today, the station is one of the most respected radio and television broadcasters in Serbia.

VOA's Open Studio program has built on its early success and is now carried by 53 television stations in the region; 45 in Serbia and Montenegro, 6 in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and 1 each in Kosovo and Macedonia. VOA is the leading international broadcaster in Serbia and Montenegro today, reaching 16 percent of the country's population each week through its radio and television programming.

By presenting American values to an audience that was predominantly anti-American, the Voice of America Serbian Service has been an important public diplomacy tool and helped promote United States foreign policy objectives in Southeast Europe. In keeping with the best traditions of the service's 60-year history, VOA has helped

guide Serbs toward greater freedom and openness, and encouraged the country to come to terms with the difficult legacy of the Yugoslav wars. VOA's objective, comprehensive reporting and analysis has provided reliable, often indispensable information to the region's Serbian population.

Events in Serbia during the last decade provide compelling evidence of how courageous journalism can serve as a catalyst for democratic change. As the region prepares to deal with new challenges, including potential political changes in Belgrade and Kosovo, there is an ongoing need to provide Southeast Europe with reliable information. Along with the important work of B92 and other brave Serb partners, I applaud the efforts of the Voice of America to convey the facts and represent the United States to the people of Serbia. I look forward to the VOA's continued success in its next decade of service.●

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a bill that we have been trying to pass for several years now—the Water Resources Development Act. Yet, again, we were not able to pass this bill that is not only important for the State of Florida, but also for the country. It includes two particularly key projects for Everglades Restoration: Indian River Lagoon and Picayune Strand. Both of these projects are critical to "getting the water right" and restoring the natural environment of America's Everglades. As incoming Chair of the Senate Environment Committee, will it be a priority of the new Chair, Senator BOXER of California, to pass the WRDA as soon as possible in the 110th Congress?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes. I commit to my friend from Florida, Senator BILL NELSON, that as the new chair of the Environment Committee, WRDA will absolutely be a priority for the committee. I look forward to working with him on projects important to Florida and passing WRDA as a whole as soon as possible in the 110th Congress.

WORLD TRADE MONTH

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about World Trade Month. I have always been a free trader, and I am very proud of the many Oregon companies that are active in international trade and are pioneers in breaking into new markets and tearing down ancient barriers to commerce and cooperation. As advances in technology and transportation shrink our world, the international trade of goods and ideas becomes more and more vital to our economy.

In May 2006, the Commerce Department's Office of Export Assistance organized a very timely and useful program that focused on Asian markets