

# P R E S S R E L E A S E

December 22, 2010

## Leslie Waters Attends Woman's Parliamentarian Conference in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Waters facilitates training for newly elected women Members of Parliament in Sarajevo

Leslie Waters, former State Representative, currently serving as Vice Mayor of the Seminole City Council, and a Political Science Adjunct Instructor at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, put her Christmas festivities on hold mid-December for the opportunity to travel to Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina to consult and train newly elected Members of Parliament and civil society representatives on caucus building and legislation development.

At the heart of the conference were productive and energetic conversations on consensus building across party-lines, and the challenges of working within complicated written and unwritten rules that are embedded in parliamentary procedure.

The 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended with the crucial brokering of the 1995 Dayton Accords bringing peace to a war torn country. The late Richard Holbrooke was instrumental in leading the diplomatic effort to ensure peace. "U.S. and NATO to this day support reconstruction, humanitarian assistance, and economic development in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the peace treaty," says Waters "and that is a good thing."

Vice Mayor Waters joined presenters from the Czech Republic, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. "*It was an honor to work with such distinguished women leaders,*" said Leslie Waters. "*Their commitment to democratic reform, infrastructure development, and building consensus on gender advocacy, is admirable.*"

The conference received welcomed recognition with the attendance of Mrs. Danuta Moon, the American Ambassador's wife; Mr. Steven Gillen, Political Officer, U.S. Embassy, and of special significance was staff from the United States Agency for International Development.

At the conclusion of the conference, one of the Members of Parliament thanked Vice Mayor Waters for traveling to the Balkans in December "*to provide such sincere, enthusiastic and knowledgeable support needed in building an effective democracy.*"

The conference was hosted by the Women's Democracy Network ([www.wdn.org](http://www.wdn.org)), a division of the International Republican Institute ([www.iri.org](http://www.iri.org)), a non-profit organization based in Washington D.C.

Since 2004 IRI has sent Waters on other assignments to work with newly elected officials, political parties, political activists and political candidates in Southeast Asia, the Mideast and Africa.

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