

Statement on Signing the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2014

March 6, 2014

Today I signed the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act into law. This bipartisan legislation ensures that the Federal Government can continue to provide timely, effective drought warning forecasts and vital support to communities that are vulnerable to drought. States, cities, towns, farmers, and businesses rely on tools and data from the National Integrated Drought Information System to make informed decisions about water use, crop planting, wildfire response, and other critical areas. As climate change increases the intensity of weather-related disasters such as droughts, wildfires, storms, and floods, providing access to updated drought-related science and tools is growing even more important.

Currently, a number of Western States are facing drought conditions, including a severe

drought in California, and my administration is pursuing every measure to provide relief and support in partnership with States. To complement the National Integrated Drought Information System, as part of my Climate Action Plan, Federal agencies have also formed a National Drought Resilience Partnership to help communities better prepare for droughts in the long term and prevent the worst impacts on families and businesses. I commend Congress for passing this bipartisan bill to continue to build our national resilience to drought and help communities, farmers, businesses, and individuals better prepare and recover when disaster strikes.

NOTE: H.R. 2431, approved March 6, was assigned Public Law No. 113–86.

Remarks at PBS’s “In Performance at the White House: Women of Soul”

March 6, 2014

Hello, everybody! Welcome to the White House for the latest in our series celebrating the music that has shaped our American story. And as someone who always shares this house with brilliant, creative, talented, somewhat stubborn women—[laughter]—I think Women’s History Month is the perfect time to honor a few more: the Women of Soul.

This is a really good lineup. And I want to thank our performers for this evening. They are fantastic. We’ve got Tessanne Chin here. We’ve got Melissa Etheridge. We’ve got Aretha Franklin. We’ve got Ariana Grande. Miss Patti LaBelle. Janelle Monae. And Miss Jill Scott. That is a lineup. I can’t wait. [Laughter]

Finally, I want to make a quick public service announcement. When Aretha Franklin first walked into Fame Studio in 1967, most of the other musicians had never heard her sing live before. When they did, one of them said: “The floors rumbled and the walls shook. My

brain shook. It was magic.” So my advice to everyone tonight is simple: Hang on. [Laughter] The Queen of Soul is in the building. If she blows your mind, it will be okay. [Laughter]

But that’s what soul music does. It makes us move, and it makes us feel. To quote Jill Scott, “Soul music is about reaching and touching people on a human level.”

For many of the performers here tonight, it all began on Sunday morning. Growing up in Detroit, Aretha sang at her father’s church and recorded her first album at that church when she was just 14 years old. Patti LaBelle was painfully shy—I cannot believe that, but this is what I have been told—[laughter]—until she sang a solo in front of the congregation and got a standing ovation. That’s when she realized she could do something special.

Eventually, artists like Aretha and Patti began mixing gospel with R&B and rock and pop. Instead of singing about love and pain, forgive-