

Montana State Senate



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SENATE STATE ADMIN.

EXHIBIT NO. 5

DATE 3.11.05

BILL NO. SR 9

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March 11, 2005

Carolyn Squires, Chairperson
State Administration Committee
Montana State Senate
P.O. Box 200500
Helena, Mt 59620-0500

RE: Kala French Confirmation to the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education

Senator Squires and Members of the Committee,

Please accept my apologies for not appearing in person before your committee this afternoon. A previously scheduled event has made it impossible for me to be there with you this day.

It is with a high level of respect for the work of your committee that I submit this letter in support of Kala French as the Student Regent for the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education. Her appointment by former Governor Judy Martz was made last summer and is now before you for confirmation.

First, allow me to address Ms. French's qualifications. She is an outstanding student, excelling academically and socially, highly respected by students and faculty as well. She has fulfilled internships with the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce, The United States Senate and the Montana University System. I have known Kala and her parents, Burl and Debby for over 20 years, and know how supportive they are of her activities. I am sure that after you have had the opportunity to interact with her, you will be confident in her ability to represent the students of the Montana University System on the Board of Regents as the Student Regent.

With regard to the term of her appointment, I will simply ask that you consider the fact that a one year appointment will effectively render the Student's Representative to the Board of Regents a meaningless position. There are only four meetings per year and a one year term would virtually leave the students without representation. For effective representation, a minimum term should be no less than two years. Allowing Ms. French

to complete a two year term, rather than the three year term authorized by Governor Martz, would give Governor Schweitzer the ability to appoint her replacement to a two year term that would begin in June of 2006, running through June of 2008. At that time he would be able to make a second appointment to the Board, which would be subject to the current appointment controversy, that confirmation would be required by the 61st Legislative Assembly.

The issue of succeeding Governors allowing unconfirmed appointments to be approved by their predecessors is not unprecedented. Governor Ted Schwinden made a controversial appointment in 1989, which was moved forward out of respect for his predecessor by newly elected Governor Stan Stephens.

In closing, please give thoughtful consideration to the qualifications of this dynamic young lady, to the students she represents and to the process and privileges granted to the office of Governor of the Great State of Montana. Confirm Kala French to the position of Student Regent of the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education. It will be an appointment that you will look to with pride.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Montana Senate District 4



Greg Barkus

GB/alr