

(STS)

Senate State Administration

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

EMERIT NO. 7
DATE 3-18-02
BILL NO. SR-13
JOHN BOHLINGER
LT. GOVERNOR

BRIAN SCHWEITZER
GOVERNOR



Friday, March 18, 2005

Senator Jon Tester
Senate President
PO Box 200500
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620-0500

Dear Senator Tester,

Yesterday Lt. Governor Bohlinger and I invited Board of Regents Chair John Mercer to meet with us in my office. I am pleased that during that meeting Mr. Mercer pledged to fully cooperate with me, and with my Administration, on implementation of the Best and Brightest Scholarship program, as well as other aspects of the Shared Leadership initiative, such as distance learning and workforce development. I look forward to Mr. Mercer and the Board working with me to build a world class university system with increased emphasis on our colleges of technology, community colleges and tribal colleges that are training Montanans for the workforce of today and tomorrow.

Mr. Mercer and I also discussed Governor Martz's nominations to the Board of Regents. I said I was pleased that Governor Martz's nominees Mike Foster and Kala French had withdrawn as lobbyists as it is impossible to serve special interests as a lobbyist and the public interest as a member of the Board of Regents at the same time. I have been concerned about Foster's votes as a legislator in opposition to the university system - discussed during the Montana Senate State Administration Committee hearing on his nomination last Monday as well as with June, 2001 Associated Press reports of his dismissal of a state employee for partisan political reasons while Commissioner of Labor and Industry.

I appreciate Mr. Foster's assurances to the Senate State Administration Committee that his perspective has changed over the years. Based on that, along with Mr. Mercer's assurance that the Board would not operate in a partisan political manner, I recommend to the State Senate that you confirm Mr. Foster's nomination.

Since enactment of legislation implementing the education article of the new Montana Constitution, eight administrations, under five Governors, have had the opportunity to

appoint a student to the Board of Regents under a provision of that statute. I told Mr. Mercer that I stand with four Governors -- Democrats Ted Schwinden and Tom Judge along with Republicans Marc Racicot and Stan Stephens -- in support of one-year terms for student regents. Only Governor Martz chose to appoint a student regent longer than a one-year term. This has the effect of extending that student regent term more than half way into the term of office of a succeeding Governor, something no other Governor has done.

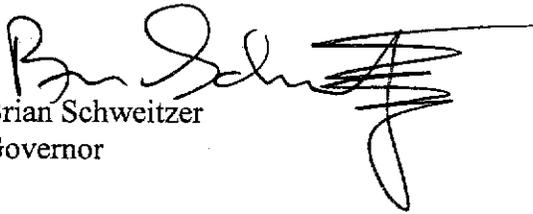
As a result, I recommend a one-year term for Kala French to the Board of Regents. I suggest the State Senate reject the three-year term proposed by Governor Martz. If the Senate follows my recommendation, I will immediately nominate Kala French for a one-year term as student regent. Further, if confirmed for a one-year term by the Senate, I will consider her for reappointment to another one-year term if she is recommended by student leaders of the Montana University System, along with other qualified students who are recommended.

I appreciate the work you do in the Senate, and very much respect the confirmation process.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,

Brian Schweitzer
Governor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Schweitzer". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "B" and a long horizontal line extending to the right. Below the signature, there is a vertical flourish that tapers to a point.