

126th Legislature
Senate of
Maine
Senate District 23

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October 28, 2013

Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Linda Lord, Nomination for Universal Service Administrative Company Board of Directors, CC Docket Nos. 97-21 and 96-45.

Dear Secretary Dortch,

I fully support the American Library Association's (ALA) endorsement of Linda Lord for appointment to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Board of Directors.

I have known Linda Lord for many years in her position as Maine State Librarian and before, and based on my professional interactions with her I can attest to her abilities and fully understand why the American Library Association has put forward her nomination; her comprehensive understanding of libraries and her breadth of experience administering state and federal programs that support libraries will serve the Board well.

Ms. Lord's commitment to libraries and education is rooted in her life-long commitment to enhancing life-long learning. She was a school librarian for 15 years and a high school teacher for 10 years. From 1992-1999 she worked for the Maine Department of Education (DOE), and it was in her capacity as the DOE's Instruction Television Coordinator that she began some of the early work on "distance learning" within the state of Maine. Before she left DOE her title was Instructional Technology Coordinator. Her work at the DOE transitioned to a position at the Maine State Library where Ms. Lord served as Director of Library Development where tremendous achievements took place impacting technology and distance learning. In 2009, Ms. Lord was selected as the Maine State Librarian.

In the mid-1990's, Ms. Lord, was instrumental in developing Maine School and Library Network (MSLN) which connects more than 95% of school buildings and libraries in Maine to the Internet. This effort came about as the result of a Public Utilities Commission rate settlement case concluded in 1995. The Maine State Library and Department of Education had filed for intervener status in this case. The settlement directed that then NYNEX provide \$4,000,000 a

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year for up to five years for rates, services and/or equipment for Maine schools and libraries. The result was MLSN. In June of 1996 the Department of Education issued a successful bond to support distance learning in Maine. An ATM system was developed from this bond and two way video classes were established. In 1996-1997 this was a very progressive step and extremely helpful to a large rural state such as Maine with a low populations density. While ATM technology is now obsolete for distance learning, Ms. Lord has championed new efforts to continue distance learning capabilities in Maine. Through a successful Broadband Technology Opportunity Grant (BTOP) in 2010, the Maine State Library, under Ms. Lord's direction as the State Librarian, successfully infused more than \$1.3 million dollars into Maine Libraries in the form of Tandberg Video Conferencing equipment (the "new" ATM technology) in eleven libraries around the state, as well as over 542 computers in 107 libraries. This has enabled technology growth and greater programmatic connectivity between libraries not just in Maine, but across the nation.

While there are many examples of Ms. Lord's accomplishments, many of which her CV acknowledge, I chose to focus on her career as a school librarian and teacher, followed by considerable work at DOE and the Maine State Library to highlight the longevity of her experience in the field.

Her role in developing connectivity among schools and distance learning throughout the state of Maine has created a platform from which all future efforts will be based. One specific enduring example of this is perhaps Governor Angus King's (now US Senator King) 2002 Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI), which equipped all students 7-8 grades throughout Maine with school issued laptops in an effort to build digital literacy. Without the MSLN structure created years earlier, the MLIT initiative would arguably not taken place.

Thank you for your consideration of Linda's nomination. Based on my personal knowledge of Linda and my interactions with her over the past several years, I would assure you that she is highly regarded in her community as well as respected in her professional career.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Thibodeau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael Thibodeau
Maine State Senator