

Testimony
before the
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
by
Patricia D. Cahill
for nomination to the Board of Directors
Corporation for Public Broadcasting
July 29, 2009

Chairman Rockefeller, Senator Hutchison and Members of the Commerce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss my nomination to the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. I also want to thank President Obama for nominating me and Senator McCaskill for her strong support for me during this process.

As a public radio station manager, when I am behind a microphone it's not usually to testify before the Senate. Instead, I am thanking listeners and encouraging them to support public radio. My first words on the radio were in 1965 at the student-operated station at the University of Kansas when I said, "What's this red light doing on?"

I started working full time in public radio during graduate school as a receptionist at an educational station. National Public Radio would not be created for two more years. I continued my early career as a Public Radio Producer-Reporter, News Director and Program Director.

I became General Manager of a public radio station in 1976 and I am currently General Manager of KCUR Radio in Kansas City and Assistant Professor in Communication Studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. During my tenure, KCUR's listening audience has quadrupled and listener contributions have increased dramatically, as have the hours and the depth of programming we provide to our community.

I have been elected twice to the Board of Directors of National Public Radio, which produces and distributes programming to hundreds of public radio stations across the country. On the NPR Board, I served as Chairman of the Technology/Distribution Committee, overseeing the satellite interconnection system, which matched the quality of our signals to the quality of our programming. I also served as Chairman of the Membership Committee, ensuring service to member stations and expanding NPR

membership to more stations, and as the first Chairman of the Development Committee, overseeing NPR's corporate and foundation support.

I was elected three times as President of Public Radio in Mid America, which represents the unique needs of our region in the public radio system.

Now I am on the air only during membership drives. Contributions from our community provide 88 percent of our funding. This level of support demonstrates the value of our programming to our community.

But the federal contribution to public broadcasting is also essential. CPB funds, provided by Congress, are the lifeblood of the system, and are the irreplaceable foundation for everything that local stations do. At my station, CPB funds make up approximately 9 percent of our budget. In addition to these funds, which go toward my station's programming expenses, federal funding from CPB has helped my station and many others with purchasing and installing digital equipment and with periodic upgrades to the public radio interconnection system.

I have a lifelong commitment to and passion for public radio and its service to local communities, and I believe my 40 years of work in the industry will make me an asset on the CPB Board of Directors as it sets the policies governing the distribution of federal funding to the system. Public radio and television can provide information and education that can help people change their lives and the lives of people around them. Our product is the content we provide: over the air, over cable, on the web, on the phone, on multiple platforms. The purpose of commercial broadcasting is to connect advertisers with their audiences. The purpose of public broadcasting is to connect people with one other and to the wider world. Public broadcasting expands the horizons of Americans, demonstrating how we are different and how we are the same.

I believe that all my experiences, my education, my teaching, and my work in public radio at the local and national levels, have led me here today. If confirmed to the CPB Board of Directors, I will work tirelessly on behalf of the American people to advance the mission of public broadcasting.

Thank you again for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.