

September 29, 1997

Mr. Terry Murphy
C-SPAN: Vice-president of Programming
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Murphy:

I cannot tell you how disappointed I am in C-SPAN's decision not to air the debate between Pat Choate and Stuart Eizenstat on whether Congress should re-authorize the President's "fast track" authority to enter into international trade treaties. Even more distressing is the reputed reasoning behind this decision, which as I understand it is the alleged "lack of public interest" in this issue.

The front page of Monday's *New York Times* dealt with the core issues involved in the fast-track debate, specifically the relationship between food safety and international trade treaties such as NAFTA. My local newspaper here in Florida has devoted much news coverage to a series of articles tracking NAFTA's effect on local tomato growers. Moreover, the fast-track issue has been a hot topic on most of the weekly new programs, such as the Shields-Gigot segment of the News Hour with Jim Lehrer and Washington Week in Review.

As I spend most of my day managing a fairly busy law firm, the aforementioned newspapers and television programs are my primary print and television sources for news. It is unlikely that the high level of interest shown on this issue by those media sources are isolated incidents.

Moreover, given the high Nielsen ratings of the 1993 NAFTA debate, having the Reform Party's 1996 vice-presidential nominee debate a credible Clinton Administration advocate such as Mr. Eizenstat would no doubt garner respectable ratings as compared to the typical evening fare of special order speeches and rehashed committee meetings. If you can air Paddy Ashdown and Britain's Third Party, one would think that C-SPAN would have a similar interest in the issues of American politics' domestic counterpart.

Perhaps that is the point. Maybe C-SPAN has become exclusionist, and reluctant to air other points of view that do not jibe with the perspective of the Republican and Democrat Establishment. If you truly believe there is no interest in the fast-track debate, C-SPAN might wish to consider adopting ABC's recent advertising campaign, which attempts to seek out dullwitted unthinking television viewers who prefer mindless primetime drivel to critical inquiry on substantive political issues.

Sarasota, Florida

P. Choate

September 29, 1997

Ms. Susan Swain
C-SPAN: Executive Vice-president
Washington, D.C.

Dear Ms Swain :

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Sarasota, Florida

September 29, 1997

Mr. Craig Brownstein
C-SPAN Programming
Washington, D.C.

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