

[REDACTED]
McClellanville, SC

29458
[REDACTED]

Brian Lamb

C-Span

Dear Brian,

I sincerely hope you read this. I'd like to do three things in this letter:

Address a problem.,

Offer a solution.,

Make a suggestion.

The problem is the three number system on your phone lines and the flack you have recieved for not dismantling them after the election.

From being a long time watcher, I would estimate the bulk of your audience to be of the Republican/Conservative persuasion. According to ones outlook there are varying arguments that can be made why this is so. Perhaps we conservatives are more ignorant and need the vast amount of political information C-Span provides. Perhaps we conservatives are not so mind set that we feel there is nothing we can learn. I prefer to think of myself as one of the second group.

Whatever the reason, that is , or was, your audience prior to the three phone option. Picture if you will an invitation for all citizens to assemble, free of charge, in a huge theater to discuss current politics...with each attendee guaranteed an opportunity to voice their views. One hundred people show up and 90 of them are conservatives anxious to vent their opinions. You have offered to alternate speakers but after the first twenty you have noone left but the conservatives. Would it be fair to allow the liberals to continue to rotate and have more than one opportunity to voice their feelings? Or should you just finish out with eighty some conservative viewpoints.

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Therein lies your dilemma.

I understand your desire to mix up the rhetoric and provide interesting and informative discourse. You must understand that the vast amount of your viewers are Republicans hungry for knowledge and eager to express themselves.

One of the first lessons I learned in retail management is we do not deal with facts so much as perception. If a customer thinks they are being done wrong, you cannot simply tell them otherwise and expect them to go away happy. They must be convinced or dealt with some other way...or you've lost them forever. Most of us out here are convinced that the mainstream media is liberally biased. They say they aren't but we have not been convinced. On the other hand, we are tired of the shrill antics of the Rush Limbaughs and Gordon Liddys. They were conservative and provided an alternative to the media bias and we loved them...for a while. But then YOU came along as we hooked up to cable and bought satellite dishes and gave us real objectivity. Liberals have a wide spectrum of choices for their political information. From thoughtful commentary to screaming exaggeration they can find a comforting liberal perspective on the days events. Conservatives have Wm. F. Buckley who has all the charisma of a doorstop, (I respect and love his frankness...but c'mon), and the hyper cannon fire of Limbaugh and Liddy.

Most of us are looking for a forum of conservatism which eschews show biz and supplies thought provoking substance.

The solution to your problem, Brian, is to not be like the White House and deny the allegations and waffle. Explain that to go back to a single line would be like having a debate with 9 Republicans and one democrat. It would be like-minded people simply reinforcing each others views and nothing new would be added to the debate. I know that has been your thinking...but you need to tell your audience. Admit that you had intended to drop the three number format and probably siad so on the air. But after careful thought about diversity of

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information and being really objective, decided to keep the present system of call-ins. There are many like me who find debates with other conservatives rarely stimulating. It usually winds up like a 'Yes Man' conference. Uh-huh...that's right...you said it...right on...etc. It has been your denial and refusing to address the issue in depth, like the Clintonites, which is frustrating. We love your selection of moderators, none of whom we can identify with either party. That speaks for the true unbiased nature of your program. I am disabled and discovered C-Span last year. Although I enjoyed the preponderance of conservative voices, I also enjoy, and understand, the need for a variety of opinions. From an intellectual and business perspective.

Finally, you once had two callers debate on the air. I thought it a wonderful idea. If you began now to signal your screener when a truly thoughtful and informed caller is on the line (so your screener can get their name and particulars after the on-air segment) and in a month or so you could have a pool of debaters from your audience. When there is a particularly interesting story in the news, get one of each on the line and allow them to debate during the final ten or fifteen minutes of your show. A simple format of four minute opening statements by each with a two or three minute rebuttal. You would not have to concern yourself with third party opinions because it would not be a politically motivated debate. Only for and against. As long as they intelligently represent an opposing view, some third party callers may be substituted for the liberal or conservative person.

I have heard many callers who seem so very thoughtful and informed and speak with such class. I would thoroughly enjoy such a segment and I'm sure most of your watchers would also.

Thanks for your time and for C-Span. I really believe that if you would take five minutes to confess to breaking your implied promise about the phone lines and explain how boring it would be one party dominating and agreeing on everything,

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this continuing phone controversy would ebb away.

Keep up the good work,

[REDACTED]