

May 26, 1993

VIACOM CABLE [REDACTED]  
LIVERMORE, CA

Attn: [REDACTED]  
V.P. & General Manager

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]

It is an insult to the intelligence of the people of San Francisco that Viacom Cable can't find a way to provide a means to carry C-SPAN 24 hours a day. By putting the Weather Channel on during the day from 3am to 5pm when people are planning their day or trips out of town; and the Playboy Channel on at night between 5pm and 3am when people are horny should solve the problem.

However this whole issue is about punishing the people of San Francisco in an effort to pressure Congress to revise the recent regulations imposed on the Cable Industry.

What is very disturbing is the nature of the power Viacom holds over San Francisco's citizens-- a complete monopoly over a vital means of communication with no direct local political accountability. Other legal monopolies such as Pacific Bell like PG&E are at least regulated by the Public Utility Commission to allow for some voice and protection for the consumer concerning the kind and level of service they get.

C-SPAN is not just another cable program option to satisfy a special kind of viewer--it is in reality a unique "21st century" answer for providing the average citizen direct, unfiltered access to the process of governing America. By limiting access to C-SPAN you are stabbing democracy in it's very heart--denying the average citizen an opportunity to watch his government in action. This in turn leads citizens to feel isolated, alienated, powerless and finally cynical about the democratic process.

I know that Viacom was not formed to promote and protect democracy and that you were not elected to serve the people of San Francisco. However Mr. [REDACTED] you and I as well as every other American Citizen are accountable to a higher authority than ourselves or the stockholders of the companies we work for--we are accountable to those Americans who died to protect and preserve the rights and privileges we now enjoy ; and to future generations who are trusting in us to be committed to more than taking from our countries bounty but in giving something back. That's what C-SPAN is a legacy to the future of democracy in America--it is giving control back to the people of their government through the dissemination of information which is power. Mr. Marx you have the power to decide wheather 24 hour access to weather reports or 24 hour access to their government serves better the citizens of San Francisco. In making that choice you will send a signal to the citizens of San Francisco of wheather Viacom Cable stands for something other than making money.

Sincerely yours

[REDACTED]  
San Francisco, Ca 94114

cc: Poku Kiley

cc: Senator Barbara Boxer  
Senator Diane Feinstein  
Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi  
John Carman, S.F. Chronicle  
Brian Lamb C-SPAN