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C-Span

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Brian:

I'm another C-Span junkie, made so by my efforts to make heads or tails of my country and its issues in order to become a more informed voter. Thanks for your great call-in show. During last Friday's round table call-in I found it impossible to get through (I don't have auto re-dial), and decided to send my thoughts to my local papers instead! I thought I'd also send one of my letters off to you - it would make an interesting base for discussion on a future call-in. Thanks for your contributions to wonderful C-Span!

Dear Editor:

What is the voting public going to do this election? I'm one of them and here are a few of my thoughts as I try to sort through the campaign rhetoric.

A starting reference point for my vote is that the past four years have not been good. Improvement of the economy is essential. Does President Bush offer a believable plan to revive the economy which is an improvement over his past approach? President Bush now admits that his attention was focused on international affairs and changes in the world order - at the unfortunate expense of his economic leadership here in our country. He claims that now he will be able to address our economic problems and that we can trust him to do that, I cannot help having doubts. The world has become a much more complex, chaotic, and inflammatory place since the crumbling of the "old world order", not a less demanding one. World problems will not stand still thus allowing President Bush the opportunity to address our economic problems without distraction. We need a president who will be able to juggle the international complexities of our age without putting the needs of his people at home on hold.

New ways of resolving conflict and the resolution of ethnic, racial, and cultural hostilities (and economic inequalities between people on those bases) is *the* continuing world issue, both abroad and here at home. Our president has not shown leadership in this area. I watched the Republican convention embrace a divisive, if not reactionary, position where elements of our population were singled out for ridicule, contempt and blame. I have seen four years of a president who has not been able to muster up the ability to work with Congress, those Republican and Democratic representatives elected by us. He has gone out of his way at every opportunity to bait and antagonize the very people he must work with. Congress is far from perfect, but every president must find ways of working effectively with the Congress he's been dealt by the people. To be able to work with the other party is a necessity as well as a sign of an effective leader. President Bush claims that it will be different next term, but what if he doesn't get the Congress he wants? Will we have another four year temper tantrum? The buck really does stop with the President.

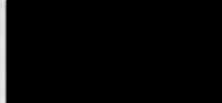
On the draft...I'm tired of hearing the Vietnam War draft records of Clinton, Quayle, Bush's sons(?), Cheney, and Gingrich used as campaign tinder. We shouldn't have a double standard for Democrats and Republicans. Yes, these men appear to have done what was in their power to avoid active combat duty during a war whose issues divided *all* families in the time period involved. 20+ years later we can see that most of them, (including Governor Clinton), have devoted their energies to service for their country in many other ways. Does that count for nothing?

On family values...dysfunctional families are a grave concern in this country for everybody, Republican and Democrat alike. Families that do not fit an arbitrary stereotype of the norm are not the problem. The problem is the growing population of people who've grown up lacking a family and/or a community support network and who feel they have no stake in our country's future. Even most functional families have had to grapple with the reality of two working parents. For many non-monied people it is a matter of economic reality, not choice. Presidential policy has been reactionary, not forward thinking in this area too. Instead of trying to recreate the past, which is impossible (and not entirely desirable), we could use presidential leadership and new policies which would recognize the present realities and help deal with the varied families and family complexities of today.

A final note...President Bush exemplifies for me the reasons that voters mistrust politicians. During his tenure in office, I've seen him watch complacently as John Sununu flitted here and there on personal business on planes supplied by U.S. taxpayers. Only when it drew media attention was Sununu out. The taxpayers are footing the bill for his *de facto* campaign manager, Baker. I'm reading Bush's lips again, but am having a hard time trying to figure out what he's saying and doing when it comes to budgets, deficits, and spending restraint. In the eleventh hour he's doling out money and special treatment to areas critical because of their vote power. He's creating entitlement programs to compensate for the jobs going to Mexico under the NAFTA at the same time as he's saying we must cut entitlement programs. He is offering tax cuts, but is keeping secrets when it comes to the source for the money for it will take to implement them. He has been blind to human rights abuses when it suits business interests, and is ready to spring back into expensive armed conflict if it suits his reelection schedule. I've even heard Bush throw petty jibes about Clinton's outstanding educational achievements. Oxford is a good school, yes, but so is Yale, so Bush need not feel out-schooled. It would be refreshing not to hear any more put-downs on education from the "Education President". Besides, it's just not becoming for the President to pride himself on being less educated. Why whine? He seems to have done okay in debates before and maybe he will realize that the people are really interested in what he has to say and how it could affect them for four more years.

Under Bush we've had politics as usual, and I just can't bear the thought of four more grueling years. I started into this election season without much enthusiasm, but to me the choice becomes clearer by the day; I will vote for a different president, one where there's a chance of improvement and change from the status quo.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular box used to redact a handwritten signature.