

[REDACTED]
Walnut Creek, California 94596-6610
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February 14, 1997

Dear Mr. Lamb,

Mrs. Barbour and I are regular listeners to CSPAN every week-day morning, usually between 5 am and 8 am Pacific Time. We think that the program is a significant public service and we thank you for it.

We would like to offer two alternative solutions to what we see as particular aggravations. I speak of the number of renegade, self-styled Democrats who call in on the "Democrat" line and demonstrate that most of them are not only feeble-minded but that many of them are Republican as well.

They usually preface their maundering, with something like this, "I been a life-long Democrat all my life, like my daddy and his daddy before him, and I'm a born-again Christian and I love Jesus and his teachings, but, by God, I just *hate* that Clinton fella's guts."

Under your present system of designating the three lines; Democrat, Republican and Independent, I estimate that one out of every five calls on the Democrat line are like the above. Assuming that ratio, and I think it is a modest estimate, out of each 100 calls received and broadcast, 60 are Republicans and 40 are truly Democrat. In the interest of basic fairness, I offer the following alternative procedures for your consideration:

(a) Instead of designating the three incoming lines as you do, I suggest designating them "Pro Democrats", "Pro Republican" or "Independent"? Then your staff members who receive the calls, (I understand that they are not screeners) can notify each caller, if they claim to present a pro Democrat or a Pro Republican point of view and they do not hold to their original statement of purpose, their call will be terminated. And follow up on the promise.

I admit that this method has a faint odor of censorship and would require your moderators to make value judgements, some of which might be subject to objection. Certainly, it would require a resoluteness of purpose that might be difficult for the moderators to maintain consistently.

This brings us to suggestion (b) which, I believe, has the virtue of simplicity. It would also require a personality trait in your moderators which, probably most accurately, could be described as "shiftiness". (That great singer Pearly Mae Bailey once described one of her boy-friends as "shifty but intense", two traits which might prove most useful in the acquisition and dissemination of news.)

O.WJ

To continue: I notice that many times the moderator does not designate which category the incoming call represents. I suggest you discontinue identifying the caller's preference but keep track of the turn-coat calls and restore the balance by making the next call compensate for the traitor. So if you have a caller who claims to be a Democrat but actually presents an anti-Democrat point of view, instead of making the next call a Republican, select another caller from the Democrat line, and if that is a turn-coat call, continue to do so, until you get a genuine Democrat. After a true balance has been achieved, then revert to the next Republican call-in. All this without designating the category of the callers.

As long as I have invested this much time in minding your business, I am sure you will learn with a surge of indifference, that I have one further suggestion to make to you. The suggestion is prompted by our frustration in identifying what kind of an organization a speaker is representing. Most of the time the moderator is careful to give the educational background of the speaker and a precis of his work history, but there is no clue as to who or what lurks behind the meaningless titles adopted by thousands of the organizations operating in and around Washington. No bona fides are proffered, no illumination is given to pierce the murk in which these corporate beings operate.

For instance, if I chose to do so, I could designate myself as a Senior Fellow at the Center for Anti-Obfuscation Studies, operate out of a dingy, third floor walk-up, use a store-front mail-drop and I'm in business. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of illustration, but I have heard many of them just as bad.

To get to my point, would it be possible to require organizations appearing on CSPAN or CSPAN2 to supply information as to their origins, their membership, their corporate objectives, and their financing and make this a part of the introduction of your guest, when appropriate? It would be a boon to the legions of news junkies who comprise your faithful audience.

