

[REDACTED]
Aurora, Illinois 60506
[REDACTED]

April 24, 1984

C-SPAN's 5th Anniversary
400 N. Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite 155
Washington, DC 20001

C-SPAN ESSAY CONTEST:

I watch C-Span Public Affairs Network because it allows me to substitute "hearsay" about politics, with my own opportunity to see, hear, think and respond for myself to the work on Capitol Hill.

After decades of little interest, understanding, energy or the time to piece together all the "one-way" news and commentary that I had absorbed from traditional sources, I now have the option to educate myself with a minimum of effort and maximum confidence in the authenticity of the information I am receiving about Congressional activities.

As my own "eye-witness" to events and first-hand information from those best prepared to comment and give testimony on the long list of affairs concerning America's citizenry, I am now able to identify and evaluate not only issues but individuals chosen to provide relevant information about current problems facing our nation.

I did not "discover" your programming until two years after the service had already been in my household, as provided by Centel Cable in Aurora. My C-Span viewing habits first began during the early morning hours of this past winter, after I had worked ten-hour evening shifts as a nurse/counselor. I would return home to find myself still wide awake at night, although too tired to read, think or sleep. I discovered your network still telecasting during those wee hours of the morning, and after just a few weeks of regular viewing (sometimes until dawn), discovered that "new life" was being brought to my reading and understanding of the political "facts" routinely reported in daily newspapers and commercial telecasts. I found myself drawing upon my own experiences of the real people, faces, speeches, emotions, concerns and candid opinions I had seen and heard expressed on C-Span. Declines in the stock market became understandable within the context of events I had heard communicated during hearings on the budget, national and international monetary deficits.

C-Span has enriched every aspect of my understanding about domestic and foreign affairs. I have followed caucuses and primaries with enthusiasm for the first time ever, and am now striving to clarify my own political identity. I look forward to the spontaneity of your call-in programs which are a tutorial in the richness of human concerns and opinions. Your hosts

invariably show their value for the caller as they gently reframe ambiguities into important questions, and respond favorably to individual insights. They are to be commended for mastery at remaining non-partisan in the service of both caller and viewers.

Watching C-Span has activated my interest and personal sense of responsibility for the outcome of our Democratic process--a system whose efficacy in generations to come, may be predicted by the numbers of informed voters participating today. Thanks to your staff at C-Span and their dedication in allowing public affairs from the nation's capital to speak for themselves, I can now count myself among the millions of Americans who have responded to your efforts and are politically re-vitalized as the result.

Sincerely,

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