

CC: T. Murphy ✓  
S. Trahern

Mr. Peter Osterlund  
Editorial Department  
The Baltimore Sun

October 9, 1990

To C-Span: Since you provide a Forum for the  
Peter Osterlunds in the Beltway, your  
attention is invited to this letter.

Dear Mr. Osterlund:

3532-94 OCT 23 ANS'D NOV 06 ANS'D  
Subject: YOUR RECENT C-SPAN POLITICAL SCIENCE LECTURE

You deserve an answer to your stated views on Special Interests. In some depth, I am taking the time to answer your views. I hope you take the time to read my views, admittedly in some depth. This letter will address several subjects:

- (1) Your views on Special Interests in the election process.
- (2) My own credentials for challenging your views.
- (3) Your own credentials and credibility for your self-appointed role as the Oracle of Delphi.
- (4) The specific examples of gerrymandering and PACs - and the deleterious effect they exert on true representative government.
- (5) The deliberate and repeated obsfuscation of the Foreign Aid issue by your two fellow panelists from Associated Press and U.S. News and Foreign Report.

#### 1. Your views on Special Interests

On or about October 3-4, you lectured the C-Span audience, not once - but three times, that Special Interests did not elect the Congress. That if we didn't like what is going on, all we had to do was vote and elect an alternative.

If you sincerely believe this, then my brother-in-law has some outrageously overpriced Monterey beachfront property he'd like to show you. I suggest you outgrow your University of Chicago mentality. Climb out from behind your word processor. And examine the real world.

#### 2. My own credentials

Before I go further, let me assure you I am not some arthritic nerd, vegetating on food stamps in a mobile home park ... as some of the C-Span callers obviously are. I was a destroyer officer on the USS Chew and watched the Arizona and Nevada go down on the terrifying morning of Dec. 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor. I have paid my dues - in that war and as a destroyer commanding officer off the cold shores of North Korea - paid my dues for a government that, in essence, supports your fat and smug life in the Beltway today. I count myself as a card-carrying Middle American who fights the goddam wars and pays the brunt of the taxes, while the thought-control network executives at 30 Rockefeller Center and Robert Redford from Malibu tell us what is "responsible".

I have made a modest living for 45 years in automotive marketing, advertising and industrial theater. I am 72 years old, married to the same woman for 47 years.

I am a daily subscriber to, and reader of, the N.Y. Times, Los Angeles Times and Washington Post. I read the Congressional Quarterly at the Troy Library. My grandchildren's Christmas gift is The Almanac of American Politics. In short, I have a fair idea of what's going on. As a resident of Huntington Woods, Southfield, Bloomfield Hills and Oxford, Michigan, I have voted for Bill Broomfield

17 times (and George Dondero before him) - and will emphatically do so again on November 5.

I am not a fat cat. Because my last company went bankrupt four years after I retired, the lawyers and trustees have devastatingly relieved us of 18% of our net worth. I make do on an income of \$31,000 annually - \$16,000 of it from Social Security. I make no apologies for my Social Security. Had I been allowed to fund my own trust fund with the 40 years of contributions that my employers and I have made to Social Security, I would not be in my present precarious financial condition.

### 3. Your own credentials and credibility

Before getting into the main thrust of my message - taxation without balanced representation - let's talk about the perception you clearly telegraph about yourself.

You are part of the problem ... the 50,000-strong Beltway Wonks of staffers and the megalomaniac press corps. I see your Army constantly on TV talk shows. Stridently shouting and interrupting at press interviews and conferences. Pontificating in news columns. Hordes of camp-followers smirking behind Congressmen and Senators at hearings. What a life in the high-income hutches of Alexandria, Georgetown, Reston, Rockville, and other over-nights in the Washington-Baltimore corridor.

You sip White Grenache in the Beltway watering holes and feed on each others' arrogance. You go on the lecture circuit for lunch and hair-do money - and tell us serfs what's best for us. And let's not forget the girls. Ah, the girls. Mary Jo Kopechne still lives.

### 4. Specific Examples of the Egregiously-Negative Effects of Special Interests

Now let's get down to it, with some hard facts about special interests.

Let's take a specific example ... the gerrymandering of California congressional districts by Willie Brown and the California Legislature. Willie is funded handsomely in his current TV onslaught in the Golden State, by the far-left personalities of Ed Asner, Jane Fonda, Shirley McLaine, Lilli Tomlin, People for the American Way, et al. By the big-money producers, writers and thought-control manipulators of Malibu, Century City and Marin County, who warp our national thought through sit-coms, talk shows and 30-second bytes.

What has special-interest gerrymandering done to California? Indeed, with California soon to grow from 45 to 52 congressional seats (one at the expense of Michigan), what has it done to distort the entire national political process?

California has 30 Democratic congressional seats and 15 Republican. By 1992, the skewed ratio bids fair to be 35-17. You tell people to get out and vote, that special interest money doesn't matter.

Well, let's look at the votes in California. In 1988, the total Democratic congressional vote was 4,720,880 Democratic and 4,278,225 Republican - never mind George Bush's plurality. That's 52.46% Democratic and 47.54% Republican. If votes really counted fairly, the present California delegation would be 24-21, not 30-15. This disparity by 1992 may build to 35-17, instead of 27-25. That's an ultimate swing of 16 votes.

Tom Foley and Dick Gephardt already stack the key committees with disproportionate Democratic counts (Ways and Means now has 23-13, for example, instead of 21-15 that the 60-40 membership ratio now would seem to call for). I shudder to contemplate what Dan Rostenkowski and his marauders in this committee will do

to us in the next 10 days. I literally face the prospect of being dead-broke at age 80 in ~~eight~~ short years ... the Welfare Queen on Detroit's St. Aubin Street will be better off. The Democratic Study Group rigs the game and puts in the fix. Gerrymandering exacerbates and perpetuates the problem.

In 1988, in effect, 622,000 California Republican congressional voters were completely disenfranchised by special-interest megabucks. What's worse, the system is so rotten that 758,048 California 1988 presidential voters did not even bother to vote for any Congressional candidate.

The cancer of gerrymandering isn't confined to California. By total number of Congressional votes cast in Michigan in 1988, the Michigan delegation should be 10-8 Democratic (at the very most), not 11-7. In 1988, Bill Broomfield drew 195,579 votes. It was the same story in San Diego and Orange Counties in California. I should be voting to whittle down that Democratic vote up in Flint, but the legislature decrees otherwise. In contrast to Broomfield's 195,579 votes, a corrupt Edward Roybal slithered into Washington with only 85,378 votes from downtown Los Angeles. That means my congressional vote is worth only 43% of the vote of some wino who rouses himself from the Los Angeles River arroyo. Tell me about special interests.

#### 4a. The Realities of PACs

If special interests don't matter, why all the PAC money (estimated at \$188 million) in the coffers of congressional incumbents, 14 times more than PACs of challengers?

In 1986, Jim Chapman from Sulphur Springs, Texas spent \$895,000 to run unopposed. Stephen Solarz from Brooklyn (that great Democrat who lusted to be Kitty Goldberg Dukakis' Secretary of State) has over \$1 million in his campaign coffers - which legally will convert in due time to become part of his personal fortune. Some very smart and hard-nose people ante up this kind of money, and they expect something in return. That, Mr. Osterlund, is Political Science 101 as it plays out today in Our Great Democracy.

The political process stinks, and my vote is powerless to do anything about it. This notion of voting all incumbents out may be a feel-good device, but it won't change anything. Special Interest money will dominate that effort, too, if it ever gets off the ground.

Many of us are just as disenchanted with Republicans. We are tired and revolted by the go-along-to-get-along mentality of permanent-minority Republicans. Fat-cat politicians like Bob Dole and Bob Michel in their \$800 suits (Michel had \$861,969 to defeat Doug Stevens in 1988) are two more leeches, disillusioning Republicans who regrettably seem to be fixtures in the Beltway scenery.

Lewis

It has gotten so bad that Jerry ~~Wilson~~ (who pines to be California's Senator on the dubious chance that Pete Wilson becomes Governor), is reported to have cut a deal with California Democrats to protect all incumbents and limit Republicans to no more than four of seven new California seats - in effect neutralizing his own party's efforts to ameliorate the gerrymandering disease.

#### 5. The Obsfucation of Foreign Aid

Your two colleagues on the C-Span panel repeatedly pooh-poohed the minimal effect of Foreign Aid cuts on the Budget process, saying it was only \$18 billion.

Technically and pedantically that may be true. But the gentlemen are playing word-games. There is tremendous Foreign Aid implicit in our NATO, Japanese, Korean, on-and-on defense commitments. Plus the enormous defaulted loans of our major banks to Mexico, South America and God-knows-where.

Chase Manhattan is in deep, deep trouble over these foreign loans. So may be Bank of America and Continental Illinois. It would be frightening to get the true picture of our 10 major banks today, and these ill-advised loans to Liberia, Brazil, et alX have this nation on a financial precipice.

Your friends may not want to define this as Foreign Aid - but watch and see what happens when this nation is called upon - not only to pay for Jim Wright and Lloyd Bentson and Tony Coelho and hundreds of other Congressmen both Republican and Democratic in this S&L bailout ... but called upon to pay for this Foreign Aid. It's Foreign Aid alright.

The only trouble is that it has already been poured down the international rat-hole.

I hope you're still with me, Mr. Osterlund. In the unlikely event you are, I invite you to unplug your word processor and tune in your audience.

The greatest attribute a truly professional journalist can have is respect for his audience. In my limited perspective, you have a considerable journey to travel before reaching the outer limits of the Real World.

Yours very sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the letter.

Oxford, Michigan 48370