

April 25, 1984

I watch C-SPAN for many, many reasons but mainly because I think of it as my network and I am proud of it. I first began to think about why I like C-SPAN when a Washington Post reporter on the morning call-in program, who was writing an article about the network, asked for comments from viewers. I realize that it is very important to me to be able to watch the lawmakers and policymakers, through committee hearings, congressional sessions, and press conferences, gather information and make decisions. What a special experience it is to receive firsthand information about the workings of our government. Even a late-night state department briefing is a special treat we do not have access to in any other way. In addition, campaign coverage on C-SPAN has given us a much more complete view of the election processes with a perspective and depth not found elsewhere.

The call-in programs are superb, especially the morning discussions with the print journalists. These guests give an added and in-depth perspective to the political scene, different from those of people usually appearing on commercial newscasts and interview shows. Brian and all of the other interviewers show remarkable skill in dealing efficiently yet respectfully with the callers. They have taught me by their example to be more tolerant of differing opinions and to refrain from prejudging people because of their manners of speech or attitudes. We viewers tend to rise to the higher standards of the program when expressing our opinions. This format provides an opportunity for what I

believe is one of the most important aspects of C-SPAN - providing citizens from across the country with a special avenue of expression in current affairs. Because of the instant response to this expression afforded by your format we feel a part of C-SPAN. What an achievement!

I could go on about my other reasons for watching - the chance to see less-publicized congressional hearings, the opportunity for my children to see government in action, the presentation of conferences and meetings of nongovernment groups. What sets C-SPAN apart, however, and makes it worthwhile is not just the format but the tone of your programming. You are fair, impartial, and treat guests and viewers alike with respect. Last week I suddenly discovered what adds a new dimension, for me, to watching C-SPAN. Time after time your guests have declared that they get much more out of participating in the program than they give. Each time they say this I feel pleased. When this happened a few days ago I excitedly realized that it is not just pleasure but also ~~the~~ pride that I feel, pride in knowing that C-SPAN is indeed America's network...and mine too.

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