[redacted]

CLEARWATER, Fl. 34623 - 3208

Feb. 1997

Dear Brian:

Re: "Time Warner VS- CSpan?"

I feel here in Pinellas County, Time Warner is a MONOPOLY. A third of the County has CSpan and CSpan 2. I am one of many who wish for both. Today, I wrote the Mayor of Clear-water, and our County Commissioner. (I'll keep you informed).

My point of View is both channels are "Gov't. Access" at the highest level and that ALL Cable Companies should carry C-Span, 2, and future C-Span Channels.

As one of your Viewer Caller's said: "Monopolies: create a bad product that Cost more." - How true, although a cable Co. is Not to blame for something caused by Nature.

Mr. Levin, C.E.O, of The above Monopoly is only out for Greed, A.K.A - MONEY and himself, first. Rumors here, are T.W.C. will buy out T.C.I. a NATIONAL Competitor. Monopolies stop all of Competition, create layoffs - unemployment / Welfare.

Where are the Anti-Trust laws - I was a-gainst the Communications Act of 1996, be cause of Creating monopolies. 1) Computer Access, 2) FAX, 3) Cable + Broadcast TV. 4) Telephone Cos.

cable
O- carriage

I will next write our State Legislators, and see what happens:- Hopefully, I can and will succeed in fighting for ALL who would like both CSpan channels -

Not knowing you personally, your are a perfect gentleman - Maybe, one day we will meet:

Please keep up the excellent CSpan, Inc. does for the Citizens - The Owners of the Country + airwaves.

Sincerely

[redacted]

Enclosures:-

The drive for profit squeezes C-Span

■ **Frank Rich**

On the vast spectrum of American culture, Brian Lamb, the *eminence grise* of C-Span, is to imperturbability what Madonna is to narcissism. In a TV universe of honking pundits, he has staked his entire network on serving up information deadpan, without ever raising his non-partisan voice. Nothing gets him ticked off.

Or almost nothing. On Jan. 6 there was a rare sighting of an ever-so-slightly testy Lamb on C-Span. In a speech at the National Press Club in Washington, he pointed out that his network's two-channel, 24-hour menu of public affairs programing had either been cut or eliminated entirely in some 9-million homes in the past two or three years. Why? Cable operators will throw off C-Span if they can sell the same precious slot on the dial to a higher bidder.

"Rupert Murdoch has dumped more money into Fox News in the last four or five months than C-Span spent in the last 18 years," he said. "He's buying his way on to cable systems." Lamb added that he was speaking in frustration, not anger, but his words conveyed real heat as he attributed C-Span's travails to the supposedly "fabulous Telecommunications Act" Congress passed last year.

If Lamb, of all non-firebrands, is smoking, there must be fire. And there is. This week marks the first anniversary of President Clinton's signing of the law he (like leaders of both parties) said would spur marketplace competition to give consumers "the benefits of lower prices, better quality and greater choices in their telephone and cable systems." But conglomerates, not competition, now drive TV: Prices are higher, choice is less, and "better quality" means more Murdoch and less C-Span.

What makes C-Span's vulnerability a particularly alarming indicator of the perils of our ruthless new media culture is that it, of all quality programing, has theoretically powerful protectors. C-Span is, after all, the prime unfiltered video showcase for Congress.

It is also a network created and financed by the cable industry itself, as a gesture of good citizenship and public relations. (C-Span stands for Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network.) But that gesture may have been a fig leaf. As Gene Kimmelman of Consumers Union says, "Now that stock prices are falling, cable companies will do anything to boost earnings."

Public service or even public relations may stand little chance against the imperatives of the bottom line. The merger-enhanced Time Warner-Turner and Tele-Communications Inc. now control what roughly half of America's cable subscribers see. You don't find them or other cable companies ejecting sex or shopping or pay-per-view channels to make room for C-Span 2, let alone for outspoken programing that might be produced by some minority voice not owned by themselves, Disney, Fox, Viacom or GE.

In his speech, Lamb understandably did not attack the industry that feeds him. It's up to the public and Congress to do so, but will they? "Politicians are terrorized by media moguls and won't take them on except about minor things like the V-chip," says Jeff Chester of the Center for Media Education. Much of the public, though beginning to complain about higher cable rates and to protest C-Span cutbacks, is still in the dark about the vast and troubling implications of the new media conglomerates.

As Neil Hickey writes in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, the 1996 Telecommunications Act was hardly covered by network news and "appeared in the business pages of newspapers (if it appeared at all)."

That's not all that isn't covered. Hickey wonders how strenuously any TV news organization will investigate human rights abuses in China, given the huge financial interests of their parent corporations in that growing market; NBC even apologized for Bob Costas' criticism of China during the Olympics.

Now Lamb tells us that even the most basic of American news — congressional deliberations — is being silenced in our new TV universe of supposedly infinite choices. We're inured by now to our media giants being greedy, but when a democracy's flow of information is being restricted, something far more important than our monthly cable bill is at stake.

A money machine

Re: *The value of cable TV*, letter, Jan. 21.

The writer says that he can't understand why someone would complain about a small increase in her cable TV rates. What does the writer consider small? My Time Warner Cable rates just increased by 14 percent last month. Since 1990 my Time Warner rates have increased 48 percent. No other industry has raised prices this much. But any other industry is not a monopoly like TWC. In 1984 AT&T was broken up for just this reason.

He also remarks about the many new channels we were given with this rate increase. We received another news station, 24 hours of golf and a "free" Disney channel. The reason for the free Disney channel is that TWC couldn't sell it as a premium because nobody bought it. Now they make it a standard offering and hide the cost in their rate increase. Shrewd.

As TWC's commercial states, "We're not just cable anymore." True. They are now a money machine.

Herb Malherb, Spring Hill

St Pete Times
Section A
Feb. 6, 1997

Robert J. Barlow
Vice President/General Manager
Pinellas County Region

TIME WARNER
COMMUNICATIONS

January 9, 1997

[redacted]
Clearwater, FL 34623

Dear [redacted]

Your letter to Gerald M. Levin, Chairman of Time Warner, was forwarded to my attention. I was sorry to see there was a misunderstanding concerning our carriage of C-SPAN II.

We evaluate our programming on an on-going basis. Input from subscribers, focus groups, ratings, and letters such as yours are all evaluated as part of our decision-making process. There are a number of programming services, including C-SPAN II that are not currently on our North County line-up. Unfortunately, C-SPAN II is in very little demand by the 150,000 plus subscribers not currently receiving the channel.

I am not sure what information you were given last September. However, you should have been informed that we typically add or change our line-up at the first of the year. As part of any changes we would evaluate the demand for new services and would take a look at the possibility of adding C-SPAN II. We did consider including C-SPAN II, but elected instead to add programming that was more in demand.

I apologize for any misunderstanding we may have caused. We will continue to look at C-SPAN II for future inclusion.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Barlow

Robert J. Barlow
Vice President/
General Manager

RJB/lz

2530 Drew Street, Clearwater, Florida 34625 Tel. 813.797.1818 Fax 813.797.9629
A Division of Time Warner