

NEWS FROM:

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NEW C-SPAN SURVEY INDICATES STRONG SUPPORT FOR SENATE TV

77 Favor Continued Coverage; Seventeen Oppose It

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- On Tuesday, July 29, the U.S. Senate is scheduled to begin consideration of the resolution that makes television coverage of its proceedings permanent. A new C-SPAN survey indicates overwhelming support among Senators for continuing the televised debates.

Seventy-seven members of the Senate told C-SPAN recently they will "vote yes" or "are leaning toward" a positive vote. Seventeen Senators indicated they would "vote no" or are "inclined to vote against" the television resolution; four Senators declared themselves undecided on the issue; while two (Sens. Lautenberg and Eagleton) declined to respond.

This new C-SPAN survey indicates an increase by ten over the sixty-seven Senators who voted on February 27 for the resolution that brought television and radio coverage to the Senate chamber for an initial trial period.

The test of televised debates began on June 2; since that date, the C-SPAN cable network has picked up live telecasts from the chamber, offering them in "gavel-to-gavel" format over a programming service called "C-SPAN II."

C-SPAN II is offered free-of-charge to cable systems across the United States that already carry C-SPAN's primary network of public affairs programming. To date, approximately 8.2 million cable homes are able to tune in to live Senate debates over C-SPAN II and more than 300 cable systems have elected to add C-SPAN II to their channel line-up. C-SPAN's original programming channel, including the U.S. House, is now seen in more than 25.5 million homes.

The Senate television provision (S.Res. 28, as amended) calls for up to 12 hours of debate on the issue; once debate has ended on July 29, Senators may vote to continue the coverage, turn the cameras off, or extend the length of the television test period.

The Senate Rules Committee, headed by Sen. Charles Mathias (R-MD), met on July 17 to discuss broadcast coverage of the chamber. During the session, panel members discussed several concerns, including:

- ° cost of installing a permanent television system.
- ° effectiveness of the chamber's present technical set up.
- ° limitation of commercial and political uses of Senate tapes.
- ° revision of the rules under which Senate business is conducted.

The Rules Committee meets again on July 24 to continue its review of radio and television coverage of the Senate.

Since the television test began on June 2, C-SPAN officials report a highly favorable reaction from press and public alike.

"Coverage of the Senate is great," a small-business person in Melbourne Village, FL told C-SPAN recently. "It's important for us to get both pictures, not just the House."

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