

Date sent: Sat, 21 Nov 1998 09:18:01 -0500
To: viewer@c-span.org
From: [REDACTED]
Subject: call-in biases

<fontfamily><param>Times New Roman</param><bigger>Dear C-Span:

I used to watch C-Span call-in shows a great deal, especially the morning shows, but I no

longer do, among other reasons, because of the way you label the telephone numbers. My

own political views and voting habits do not place me in any one of either the

Liberal-Conservative-Moderate or the Democrat-Republican-Other categories, and I am

very uncomfortable about labeling myself by calling in on a particular line. More than that, I

really dislike the categorization of other callers that these distinctions require. When I hear

your moderator say "... on our Liberal line" or "... on our Conservative line," etc., I feel I

already know what the caller is going to say (although of course I am sometimes wrong) and I lose interest. It is unfair to your callers to force them into these categories since, I believe, many are

hybrids like me. Listening to a string of what I expect to be pre-packaged opinions is not

conducive to my viewer loyalty and I have, as I said, stopped watching.

I understand that you are trying to secure a balanced set of viewpoints. I remember the

"good old days" when some callers would complain that too many people

were being heard

from who, in their opinion, were biased the wrong way. Too many conservatives, too many

liberals, and the like. In trying for balance, I feel, your programs have become rigid and

monotonous and boring.

Why not let the calls speak for themselves? Have three telephone numbers and simply take

calls in order. If a segment includes more people with one persuasion or another, the show

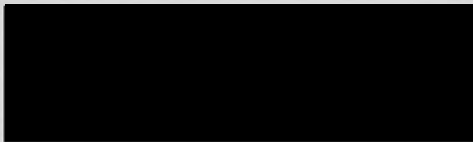
will have an added depth of meaning because we viewers will get a more accurate picture

of where public opinion -- at least the sample that watches C-Span -- stands at a particular

moment. This approach is a better public service than your present overly-correct, timid

and distorted practice.

Bring back bias! Restore unfairness! Let C-Span viewers speak for themselves.



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