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C-SPAN
400 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite 412
Washington, DC 20001

Gentlemen:

My family and numerous others among our friends in this community who regularly watch C-SPAN and appreciate the outstanding public service performed by its airing, are sorely frustrated by the policy of our local cable service, Northern Cable TV of Petoskey, Michigan, over whose Channel 24 C-SPAN ostensibly is available but which actually allows viewing only on a grossly truncated schedule. We deem this an arbitrary action on the part of the Cable operator's management and a disservice to its subscribers.

Northern Cable TV has taken upon itself the switching of programming from C-Span at 2:00 p.m. each day to either old black-and-white "B" movies 30 to 40 years old, or to the most questionable TeleMarketing schemes imaginable (full-length paid programs as well as paid commercials), e.g., "hair growing" products for balding viewers, how-to-make-millions in real estate, etc., etc., much of it unethical and deceptive in approach at best. These are revenue producing airings on the C-SPAN channel and not a public service!

The very notion that people who regularly watch C-SPAN to become better informed citizens would prefer such low-grade TV fare is indeed "hair raising" but totally unacceptable on the face of it.

The rejoinder when complaints are registered by telephone regarding this policy purports that "... we are only giving our viewers what they prefer ...", a claim we dispute as being devoid of documentation or evidence of fact.

It is our understanding that C-SPAN is a public affairs offering, supported by the Cable TV industry in order to afford the public an insight into the workings of our government and, where available, is meant as stand-alone programming on its own designated channel.

If we are correct in this, what remedies are immediately available to us as Cable subscribers to reverse the local operator's policy of non-compliance?

One action we are exploring, via a market-wide survey of Cable viewers, is to mount legal action that will

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challenge the renewal of this facility's cable license. It is a monopoly and we are consulting appropriate federal agencies and congressional sources regarding procedures designed to accomplish this.

The individual making the decision to deny access to the full C-SPAN broadcast schedule in our viewing area is a person named Connie Martin, or so we are informed. She is apparently office manager of the Petoskey, Michigan branch of Northern Cable TV, whose address is 2255 M-119, zip code 49770.

If we are correct in our assumptions that C-SPAN is meant as an industry-supported public service and not as a commercial venture for the benefit of non-cooperative Cable TV operators or their personnel, we would respectfully request that you address this matter at your earliest convenience. Please advise.

Most Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Petoskey, MI 49770