

[REDACTED]
Montrose, CO 81401
[REDACTED]

May 14, 1996

C-SPAN
400 North Capitol Street NW 650
Washington, DC 20001

Gentlepeople:

Please consider this request for an additional phone line for viewer call-ins. I feel what is needed is a separate line, (similar to how you separate Eastern and Western States,) for cellular phone customers. Many of your rural listeners are in the situation which I am, that of not having a permanent telephone "land-line." Being cellular phone customers without access to regular phone lines, we are in a special situation, one in which ANY usage of our telephone costs us money, **WHETHER WE GET THROUGH TO YOUR LINES OR NOT.** We are charged for air time during our attempts to get through to you, even when we get a busy signal. Even more frustrating is getting through to a ringing line, only to have that line continue to ring without being answered, and eventually having the phone company arbitrarily disconnect us after three or four minutes (even as the "timer" on our cell phone continues to accumulate). Perhaps we locked in the "cell" world (pun intended) cannot prevent the phone companies from cheating us like that, but it would be nice if C-SPAN could help us avoid unnecessary charges.

On a recent show, one of your commentators responded to a caller that you do not answer [ringing] phone lines in order that the caller not be charged for the call. I understand and appreciate that. It is wonderfully considerate to callers with "land-lines", but a great disservice to callers on cellular phones. As a result, cellular callers are being billed not only for their attempts to get through (busy signals), but also billed when we DO get through but do not have our calls "answered". Were we to get on the air, it would not be a bad thing (we know when we call the charges to be incurred). However, to get through to a ringing line, which then "appears" to be ignored, it is more than merely frustrating to be disconnected while being charged for the call.

A separate line(s) for cellular phone callers would permit us to keep our costs to a bare minimum, while still having a fair opportunity to get through. This line could be set up so that only calls actually to be taken would ring and be answered. If the cell line was not next on the discussion "queue", we should receive a busy signal, which we could then hang up on, ceasing the charges, and then have the option of recalling, or giving up. This would be rather simple to implement, the C-SPAN operator in charge leaving the line "off-hook" (generating a busy signal,) until a cellular call was next on queue. Then the line would be restored to the "on-hook" status, allowing the next on-air call to be answered. I am sure I am not alone in feeling that I would rather be paying for a

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ringing line which I knew I would get through on, than sit and listen to a non-answered ringing line while my bill needlessly ran up.

Similarly, it would be appreciated if [at least on the cellular line] you would disconnect the line (off-hook) once your last call is taken, so that those who subsequently call in do not access a ringing, but not-to-be-answered line. Many times I have been able to get through to a ringing line, wait two or three minutes, only to hear your commentator then state that no more calls will be taken, or merely that "we are out of time." Obviously, if you are running out of time, and no further calls are to be taken, you could save many of us much money by preventing us being in these "pay-for-nothing" situations.

For your consideration on this matter, I thank you very much, and am available if you need clarification or assistance on this.

I have been a C-SPAN "junkie" for eight to ten years, having been fortunate to get through twice, once earlier this year, and once in the late '80s/early '90s.

I thank you for C-SPAN, and wish it could be required viewing in our nation's schools, at least in Civic/Current Events/Political Science courses.

I apologize for the length of this letter, but felt it was necessary in order to more fully explain this unique situation.

Sincerely,

