

[REDACTED]
Glenrock, WY 82637
May 6, 1994

Mr. Brian Lamb -- C-Span
400 N. Capitol St. NW #650
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

This morning I was watching your early call-in show with several members of the media and Rep. Jim Cooper. Later in the day I watched part of the symposium of State Legislatures, and part of discussion on media and government. I much prefer the call-in format. For one thing, I don't believe you can manage who calls and what they have to say. Except for "Letters to the Editors" sections of magazines and newspapers, C-Span may be the only open format we have to know how other people feel on very serious issues. Our whole jury system is based on the axiom that "the people", ordinary citizens, when informed can come to a just and reasonable conclusion. On the whole, I would rather have the varied opinion of a lot of concerned individuals with no axes to grind than the "self appointed" "elite" &/or "intelligentsia". I read editorials, but I also read all "letters to the editors" in any publication, and if I had to give up one of them, it would be the editorials because I have now way of knowing what their hidden agenda is.

At the present time, C-Span is the only place where we can watch our government in action. One thing we don't get to watch is the finagling which goes on "in committee" and "in conference". Is there any way to televise committee deliberations on such things as the Budget? -- or to be able to know who backed-out of support for such things as the A-to-Z bill; who, having signed it then voted against it? I watched C-Span's pre-Easter coverage of the Senate debate on the "prayer in schools" issue and felt sure that it would be a long weekend of filibuster and open airing of the issue when I went to bed around 2:00 AM our time, only to wake on Saturday to find that pressure and sleight-of-vote had taken it out of open debate and quashed the whole issue on the side. Reading Robert Novak (page 9 of The Conservative Chronicle of May 4, 1994) I now know more specifically what happened and am disappointed in Mr. Dole. It would appear that this also happened with the A-to-Z bill, which was specifically designed to get things out into open House debate. I feel strongly that when decisions are made behind-the-scene I am being disenfranchised. I may be a minority, and I can stand to lose; but to be prevented from even having my point-of-view aired really angers me. As to being a minority, I would like to remind every member of Congress, in either house, that Mr. Clinton "won" with only 43% of the vote, and that must be "politically correct" math. 57% of the people did not vote for Mr. Clinton. As long as the majority party in Congress acts as I have observed them do recently, I can and will switch channels at any time that the president and his unelected cohort appear on the screen. Their opinions are as irrelevant to me as they have clearly indicated that mine are to them. More than

anything we need openness and free debate. This is what the First Amendment is about - - freedom of speech not the right to throw manure at a canvas and call it "art". The root of distrust is management (or rather control) by those you neither trust nor respect. I have seen nothing in the last 17 months to make me trust the Clinton regime, and much to make me distrust them.

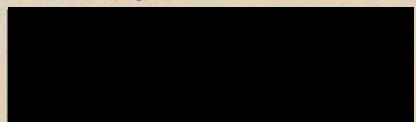
An entry under "honesty" in Random House' "Dictionary of Thoughts" (1960):

Do not consider anything for your interest which makes you break your word, quit your modesty, or inclines you to any practice which will not bear the light, or look the world in the face. - - - (Marcus Antoninus).

One of the differences between your coverage of the House and the Senate seems to be that you show a scoreboard of voting on the screen in the House and none for the Senate. Also, when a recorded vote is called for in the House the names are read out loud. I wish that you would do the same in coverage of the Senate. How difficult would it be for C-Span to list by name the "aye" and "nay" votes for each bill? A-to-Z was supposed to make each congressman more accountable for his or her vote, I must conclude, with its defeat, that they do not want to be held responsible. All government should hold itself to a standard as high or higher than that of the governed, when they don't, they have become a tyranny and that was the basis of our revolution of 1776.

It should not be necessary for the electorate to have to monitor representatives in order to know what they think and how they vote, but presently it seems to be the case and C-Span seems to be the only light shining in a very dark place right now. Please continue. If anything increase the call-in shows, and since you have to have guests there to answer, I think that their titles as to position and company they work for etc. is appropriate and giving their addresses an added plus. But such labelling as "elite" "intelligentsia" "expert" etc. should be dropped. Let them earn these soubriquets on the show. Thanks!

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular box used to redact a handwritten signature.