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C-SPAN
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1168-90

MAR 14 REC'D

Dear Mr. Lamb:

Before you get too far into this letter and deem it to be a negative criticism of your network let me just say that I am a C-SPAN "junky". Unlike other viewers I don't know if you are doing a great job since there is no other program or rather network like C-SPAN. If one was to compare you to any other or all network(s) or program(s) C-SPAN would appear 9+ standard deviations above the mean. You are without comparison and therefore admittedly great.

You recently had an individual from KATO and a representative from the postal workers union on a call-in program in the evening. The only real conclusion that any astute taxpayer-citizen-postal patron-voter could conclude from that "match" was you had a "heavy weight" defending the post office's view point and a "feather weight" proposing or asking where is an alternative.

Some points he could have made, based upon information from the USPS's own records, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) responses and verified secondary sources are:

1) Compared to the CPI, as our "heavy weight" suggests, since 1945, 1st Class postage should be, if increased at the rate of CPI, \$0.18 versus \$0.25 which is 38.9% higher. Yes, granted even though these figures are accurate and true, "figures don't lie, liars figure". The focus here is not on these statistics or his opponent's statistics but the lack of statistics on his part.

2) The Post Office does not deliver to "every community" as indicated by his opponent. The Postal Operations Manual states in part that a carrier "is not required to dismount" for some communities and individual/business postal patrons. These locations can and are in ZIP Codes located in cities. There are a number in Corpus Christi alone, and the Post Office in response to a FOIA request stated that there were too many locations that they did not deliver to, to provide a list. He should also have known that United Parcel Service will deliver to any address in Alaska and the Post Office will not.

3) His opposition contended that there is oversight of the Post Office. At the very best this is questionable.

The recent overall weighted average increase in postage was 17.6%, granted by the Postal Rate Commission (PRC). Post Office management however only requested an overall weighted average increase of 15%.

The PRC in a letter to this writer stated that the ".....operation of the Postal Service is not within the jurisdiction of the Postal Rate Commission,.....". Apparently all they do is increase the rate when asked.

United States Representative Ford, head of the Post Office and Civil Service Committee in the House of Representatives, during a floor debate, made numerous contradictions of facts that were readily available from the PO or were already in the public domain. To clarify this writer wrote to Representative Ford, outlining his numerous statements, compared to referenced facts. Neither he nor his staff responded to my three letters, the last one "Return Receipt Request". Since I still have the receipt, he got the letter. This individual is head of the committee that provides "oversight" of the post office. Either he is ignorant of what goes on in or around the Post Office or he is fabricating to support his (their) own agenda.

The PO's current financial statement does not break out franked mail as has been separately categorized for decades. Could it be current taxpayer/voter interest in congressional perks? A response from the Postmaster General is expected within 6 weeks, if he have interest.

If there is "oversight" it certainly is not the "fox guarding the hen house" nor is it "watchful and responsible care". It may however be "an inadvertent omission or error" or a clear understanding of the "political value" of all the Postal Systems various assets.

4) Privatization won't work! The reason why privatization won't work is because it will never happen.

Representative Philip M. Crane (R-IL) introduced a bill that "would privatize the Post Office by giving the employees full ownership of the corporation." As with all other attempts, those "members of Congress who supported privatization mysteriously found their mail in gutters and river beds."

The postal unions fought "tooth and nail" against the \$40,000.00 in assets gift to each employee. Why? Primarily, and this is from their own audited financial statements, the PO is broke. Using a timely subject, by all published and audited accounts, as of September 30, 1985, the PO was in worse financial shape than the entire S&L industry at that time. The PO can not survive with any more competition or on its own. It will continue to need these ridiculous rate increases just to break even.

5) His opponent indicated that the post office has one of the lowest rates in the world. The fact is (FOIA and financial statements) the post office has been comparing the same 13 or so countries since 1974, except for a few years. Why the skips? Maybe it wasn't favorable.

For these comparisons the PO only converts currency. They do not adjust for population density, population size, consumer prices, transportation infrastructure, prevailing weather conditions, automation, etc., etc. If you make some rough adjustments based upon comparable, reliable statistics, the PO would rise to #2 or #3 since 1974. Their sample, and they admit that these are the only countries they survey is extremely small to make such generalizations. Because it is also rigid (not random) at best it is flawed if not rigged.

There were a few more but more importantly the KATO representative could have made a better case than a feeble plea for a competitor to the Post Office so postal patrons would have a choice. Their financial statements, policies and procedures, nepotistic relationship with the Congress, Executive and Judicial, staffing and management policies, just to mention a few offer virtually an unlimited source of evidence to build a case. It unfortunately appeared that gentleman from KATO was drawing from his personal memory of newspaper articles.

Additionally, the time allowed for each guest was skewed to the representative of the Post Office. C-SPAN seemed to be concerned about the viewer's time on the air but ignored this lopsided match.

Brian, this may be impossible to solve or even address given your "position of neutrality" but somewhere C-SPAN or a viewer ombudsman needs to level the playing field. Over the years I have walked away from C-SPAN's programming with what I thought was a balanced view. Yes, viewers have in the past corrected guests or brought up other reference sources for review. This program, because of the mismatch, from a critically factual point of view, left much to be desired. It is not C-SPAN's fault but possibly you can either remain conscious of the potential for "hands off" bias or somehow, to some degree, correct it.

Brian, again possibly in another way, C-SPAN continues to provide more of a meaningful education than any other network or program, even those "education" programs.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Corpus Christi TX 78413

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P.S. Please pass along to the KATO representative. If he is serious about which he speaks, I would be happy to review this and much more.