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April 12, 1993

RE: Perot/Senate Blackout-April 93

DEAR C-SPAN PRODUCERS/PROGRAM EDITORS,

After several years of watching C-Span present all viewpoints, unfiltered access to Washington events, unbiased coverage of confrontational ideas, I felt betrayed by your political decision to skip Perot's Senate appearance. Your decision to "burn the book" rather than invite opposing advocates to express alternative insight into the event, signals a basic change in C-Span policy to me, a scary change.

I have especially appreciated C-Span hosts who have closely guarded their personal political opinions. It did not ring true, hold creditability, when they explained this Perot omission because C-Span was short of cameras and had already provided Perot's allotted TV exposure time. Am I to assume now that C-Span is filtering access to open hearings according to political agendas of participants? Will campaign-contributing PAC lobbyists testifying at hearings be likewise pre-evaluated?

The Perot phenomena is a significant change in the basic structure of political interaction. Media coverage of his populist advocacy is uncharted, plowing new ground, an evolution of historical experience. C-Span's effort to contain it in old wine skins is ostrich-head in the sand. Listen to your own 4-6-93 National Press Club coverage of Michael Crighton.

Government is obsessed today with debt, deficit, budget cuts, sacrifice, jobs, tax-base, congressional reform, campaign reform, energy tax, ethics, perks. NONE of these would be on Washington's priority list without Perot's 1992 impact. Because of this, many groups (which C-Span routinely covers) have invited Perot to speak. His high profile is their choice, not C-Span's responsibility to censor.

I am a Perot supporter, because I strongly desire MAJOR campaign/congressional reform. I am well acquainted with Perot's views from many other basic sources. He neither gains nor loses me by too much exposure on C-Span. What I wanted to see was Senate interaction, reaction, thought processes to grassroots concerns. That is not available to me elsewhere.

What I saw instead was a PBS Special explaining the invaluable educational value of TV to our culture via subtle inclusion of AIDS, abuse, teen pregnancy, eating disorders etc in the story-line of targeted programming.....AND TV's CEOs on C-Span defending the non-influential content of murder, rape, mayhem, guns, aggression, violence in their programming for commercial profit. I took their advice and exercised my "OFF switch" option.

C-SPAN CAN INFORM, EDUCATE, CHALLENGE, INFLUENCE THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY through involved citizenship, or it can become one more media outlet amongst hundreds. YOUR CHOICE.



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ATTN: PRODUCERS/POLITICAL EDITORS

