

[REDACTED]
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
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I watch C-Span because it satisfies my lifelong hunger to know what our government is up to: not just what happens, but how and why it happens.

Let's face it: the ordinary news media are limited. The papers do a good reporting job but must compress everything into a few columns. I've learned that debates and hearings on crucial public issues simply can't be captured in a few lines of type. Lost are the tone, the color, the character of the debate, and especially the demeanor of the people at center stage. Commercial television adds sound and pictures but insists on putting everything into miniature capsules. The networks titillate, but they don't illuminate. Public broadcasting has been a help, but these stations have their own time problems and seem to be on the same quest for ratings that the networks pursue. I often got up still hungry, even after a McNeil-Lehrer feast.

Then came C-Span, as if prepared to my order. You show me how newspapers across the country treat a story, depending on their subscribers. This has been a real adventure. I've been able to experience a little of what distant Americans are going through without leaving home. You've also enabled me to be there, alongside the editors, as they decide what is news and what isn't. This is particularly satisfying when I've been in the hearing room with the reporters and seen the news happen. Often enough, we C-Spanners have been able to watch a story develop days before the press began to tell it. And we've been touched by the subtleties and nuances of the issues, as other readers have not.

I get to see my representatives in their natural habitat. As it happens, I am proud of our entire delegation. Connecticut must be a special state. We keep electing good people. I know, because I've seen them in action.

C-Span gives me background that can't be had elsewhere. I witness the whole story. To get a true appreciation of what happened, for instance, to that Defense Department "whistle-blower," you really had to be there. You were, and so was I.

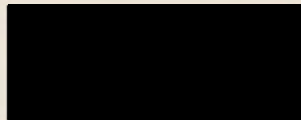
Your staff is superb. You do everything perfectly -- the beautiful music, seminars, National Press Club, interviews, and so much more -- all without intrusive commercials. When I am not at my job, you will find me at home, "Spanning out," as my son calls it. Without C-Span, my house would be cleaner and my light bill would be lower, but I would be poorer. I don't get to Washington more than once every 20 or 30 years, but with C-Span I can be there every day, observing and learning. C-Span makes it possible for me to be a good citizen of this fragile republic, and I'm grateful for the opportunity.

[REDACTED]
HARTFORD CT
06106
[REDACTED]



[REDACTED] **England**
[REDACTED] **HARTFORD CT**
06106

[REDACTED]
New Haven, Connecticut 06506



@ - SPAN
SUITE 155
400 N. CAPITOL ST. N.W.
WASHINGTON DC, 20001

A2



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