

Monroeville, PA 15146
January 28, 1991

CSPAN
400 North Capitol Street
Suite 650
Washington, D.C. 20001

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Dear Sir:

I have two complaints on your coverage of the Senate Ethics Committee:

1) After all those weeks of testimony you deemed it necessary to move to the House of Representatives so we could watch those members giving speeches to an empty chamber. This was absolutely unfair to Senator DeConcini. We heard every word of Mr. Bennett's accusation, but not Mr. Hamilton's rebuttal. Even though Senator Heflin said Mr. Hamilton had been given an extra 15 minutes, we heard only 28 minutes total...10 minutes of DeConcini included.

I heard your explanation of why you had to go to the House proceedings. However, a tape delay of those speeches would have been fairer.

It is for the committee to decide on any violations committed and any sanctions given. However, once you started televising this proceeding equality and fairness to the accused should have been a primary concern. Your lack of coverage was obviously unfair to Senator DeConcini, but the people of Arizona lost an opportunity to judge fairly when you curtailed the final summation in DeConcini's behalf.

The American people may lose a Senator, but they have lost much more when the media is unfair in its coverage. Whether it is a newspaper printing only Mr Bennett's point of view, or National Public Radio giving only Common Cause's point of view or CSPAN eliminating rebuttal, you are all guilty of injustice and inequality when you choose to limit coverage or report inaccurately these important proceedings. The Ethics of the Media could not stand the close examination these senators endured.

2) Since you did not or could not proceed with Mr. Hamilton's rebuttal in its entirety, a replay would have been responsible action. Anticipating your response that "it was shown", let me assure you that it was not advertised appropriately. Never during the 28 minutes Mr. Hamilton and Senator DeConcini were on the air, nor during Mr. Cranston's time period, nor immediately after the proceedings ended was

cc: T. Murphy ✓

a time given for a replay of the proceedings. You cannot repair the damage you have done to Senator DeConcini. But he is not the only loser. If the Committee should decide no violations of Senate Ethics were committed by DeConcini, then they are going to be in trouble with their constituents as they only heard Mr. Bennetts accusations and not DeConcini's reply. I sincerely hope your decisions on this programming gaff have been reviewed and a fairer and more equitable policy has been formed. Whether I believe Senator DeConcini is guilty of any ethics violations or not, I do believe he was not given "his day in court" by CSPAN and that is a violation of all we should revere in this country. When the media loses it's credibility this country will then be run by despots no more honorable than those in Iraq. Keep your honor. It is the most important part we have in a democratic system.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the letter.