

October 8, 1999

Brian Lamb
C-SPAN
400 N. Capitol St. NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb,

As a long time C-SPAN watcher and enthusiast, I want to make you aware of how Time-Warner Communications plans to treat your channel here in Manatee County, Florida.

I moved here in August from Montgomery County Maryland. I subscribed to the lowest cost "Basic" cable there in part for the good reception of all three DC PBS stations, but primarily because I brought me C-SPAN. Since I am interested in information, rather than entertainment, C-SPAN is a natural for me. I especially liked Booknotes (including the book!), Road to the White House, and Prime Ministers Question Time. I thought C-SPAN an appropriate "present" from the cable networks and the cable television industry in return for the rapid and insulating force they promulgate.

When I moved here I learned that the local cable monopoly was Time-Warner, and explored what they had to offer. It's the same old story, of course.

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They push entertainment. HBO/linemex for only \$52.79 per month and FREE installation. Or "standard (sic)" service for a mere \$32.74 per month -- 62 largely uninteresting channels of mostly entertainment. But if you really insist, they will admit that you can buy "basic" service for \$11.50 per month: about 20 channels, most of them commercial and loaded with commercials. With an "activation charge" of \$28.95 for the first TV set and \$19.95 for each additional one. (My house is already wired for cable, but still they charge to begin service.)

But the big news is that they are installing fiber-optic cable in Manatee County, which will be the standard service in a few months.

Even bigger news to me, and I hope also to you, is that while C-SPAN is part of the "basic" service now, once the fiber-optic cable comes to my neighborhood, C-SPAN will be "upgraded (sic)" to "standard" service instead of "basic." It will cost this community a hefty \$32.79 / month to get C-SPAN; it ~~is~~ will NOT BE AVAILABLE for a lowly \$11.50 / month !!!

So much for the cable television industry's commitment to public service in Manatee County, Florida! So much for their "gift to the American people." Henceforth it is not a gift, but yet another commodity to be marketed.

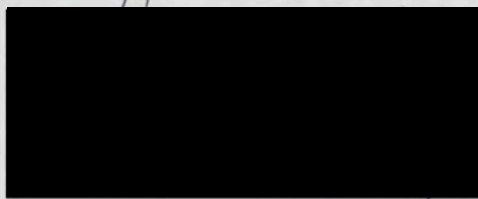
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And, by the way, C-SPAN2 is now and will remain only available with the 3-times-more-expensive "standard" cable service and even then time-shared with "E! Entertainment" no less. How much of the time is C-SPAN2 I can't say; I won't pay that much to get it.

I find it shocking that Time-Warner wants to make us pay three times as much as before just to get C-SPAN in Monroe County, Florida. They are renegeing on the cable television industry's claimed commitment to public affairs broadcasting, and shutting us out of hearing our House of Representatives in action (much as the Senate).

I hope you will find this as shocking as I do, and perhaps able to do something about it. You have created this wonderful source of information for the American public. Please don't let Time-Warner, or any other cable monopoly, take C-SPAN away from us.

Sincerely,



P.S. We also need C-SPAN Rodis down here!