



January 19, 2007

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
The Speaker's Rooms
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

Thank you very much for such a positive and constructive dialogue last week regarding C-SPAN's two requests for the House telecasts, i.e. private cameras and electronic votes. During our conversation you asked us for an overview of the current House television system, more specifics on what we are asking for, and some explanation about what State of the Union night will look like from a television standpoint, so that you could continue to process your thinking.

- The permanent system, which is operated by the House Recording Studio, relies on six robotic cameras permanently installed in pairs at the Gallery level—two on each side and two at the back of the Chamber. Their telecasts of the House floor debate are sent to a hub site where C-SPAN and all other media organizations tap into them. These cameras provide the only video of the House currently available to the media, except on the rare occasions of Joint Sessions and Joint Meetings, when independent media are permitted by the Congress to create an alternative pooled telecast.
- For State of the Union night, the network pool (comprised of ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, and Fox) is planning a ten-camera production. On Tuesday, as in past years, the pool will be permitted to bring several additional cameras of their own into the chamber, a mix of fixed and roving, manned and unmanned. These various cameras will be situated on the floor, look out from behind the Speaker's dais, and at several points on the Gallery level. (News organizations that are not members of the network pool are permitted to tap into this production, but must pay to do so.)
- C-SPAN's proposal for ongoing coverage of House floor debate is more modest than this week's SOTU production. We are seeking permanent installation of just three additional cameras at the Gallery level, near the existing House cameras. These would also be operated robotically, with no technicians standing behind them. The video from these cameras would travel by fiber to the hub site where other media organizations could tap into our feed (for free) or continue to access

the House-produced video. We are also prepared to pay for the installation and ongoing operation of these additional cameras.

As you consider our request, a question may arise as to why C-SPAN should take the lead on this proposal. Here is our reasoning: We are the only media organization that uses, and will continue to use, the entirety of the House telecasts on a daily basis. And, C-SPAN brings to the effort an editorial and production team that has amassed twenty-eight years of experience with daily House floor coverage.

Finally, as we discussed in your office, we want to underscore that C-SPAN is fully prepared to make our House floor video available, without charge, to any media organization credentialed by Congress. This is essentially the same practice employed on a daily basis in hearing rooms across Capitol Hill, when the Radio/TV Galleries declare that space limitations require pooled coverage. C-SPAN is nearly always the designated pool production team.

You may be interested to know that last month the Speaker of the British House of Commons announced that their long-standing restrictions on cameras shots in the British House would be permanently lifted following a two-month trial period. In the announcement, their Speaker said that going forward, the private media cameras that televise the Commons would employ "a greater use of reaction shots in order to illustrate the mood of the House."

Madam Speaker, if you need further details beyond this, we stand at the ready to provide them. And, if you think a temporary test such as the British conducted would be useful, we are prepared to make that happen.

We look forward to continuing our conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian P. Lamb". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Brian P. Lamb