

March 13, 2009

Mr. Richard Cooper  
President  
Grid Iron Club  
c/o Los Angeles Times  
1025 F. Street, NW  
Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear President Cooper,

Probably no group is more aware of the enormous transformation underway in the media than the members of the Gridiron Club's Executive Committee. Many of the club's leaders can testify directly to the swift-moving changes in media organizations in the last year alone, a digital revolution enhanced by a changing economy.

It is because of these vast changes, coincidental with a new Administration pledging greater transparency in Washington that C-SPAN is writing to renew our request to the Gridiron Club to open your annual dinner to our cameras.

A quick search of YouTube makes a strong case to permit us to cover this year's dinner. Last year, within minutes after the dinner ended, several private recordings of the performances were posted to the internet and have been viewed online more than 150,000 times. Not surprisingly, these grainy videos were immediately picked up and aired by the cable news networks. This year, you can be sure that some insiders will add yet another digital technology to the reporting and "twitter" from the floor as the dinner progresses. Much as the Gridiron Club might wish, not much is truly off the record in the digital age. More substantively, it's hard for all of us as Washington journalists to push for greater access to politicians, when one of the press corps' best-known institutions maintains its off-the-record policy.

Dick, we hope that your presidency will turn the pages of history for the Gridiron Club. We promise video quality infinitely better than what's posted on YouTube and an unobtrusive production that will not interfere with your event. I'd like to follow up this letter with a phone call so that we might talk about our proposal directly.

Respectfully,



Terry Murphy  
Vice President, Programming