

**The original documents are located in Box 25, folder “Audience” of the Michael Raoul-Duval Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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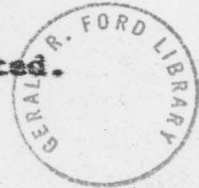
August 25, 1976

*File  
Debates -  
Audience*

Dear Bill:

I wish to acknowledge receipt and thank you for your August 24 letter to the President regarding the proposed debates between Presidential candidates.

You may be assured your letter will be called promptly to the attention of the President and his advisers. I know your recommendations will be greatly appreciated.



With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

Max L. Friedersdorf  
Assistant to the President

The Honorable Bill Goodling  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

bcc: w/incoming to Dick Cheney for further handling

MLF:JEB:VO:vo

*bcc: w/copy of incoming to Mike Duval, fji*

BILL GOODLING  
19TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEES:  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND  
LABOR

SUBCOMMITTEES:  
ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY AND  
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
LABOR STANDARDS

COMMITTEE ON  
SMALL BUSINESS

SUBCOMMITTEES:  
SMALL BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION OVERSIGHT  
SMALL BUSINESS LEGISLATION

*Copy*

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

August 24, 1976

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
ROOM 1713  
LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-5836

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
FEDERAL BUILDING  
200 SOUTH GEORGE STREET  
YORK, PENNSYLVANIA 17403

CHAMBER BUILDING  
212 NORTH HANOVER STREET  
CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

POST OFFICE BUILDING  
ROOM 209  
GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17325

The Honorable Gerald R. Ford  
President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.



Dear Mr. President:

*MIC*  
I am writing to compliment you on your decision to debate the Democratic nominee for President this fall and to express a concern that I have about the format for the debate.

If the debate is sponsored by the League of Women Voters, as has been proposed, I have no doubt that they will desire a format which will include a live audience. I think it would be unwise to agree to this portion of their proposal. The League of Women Voters audiences are normally more Democratic and more liberal than the voting population as a whole and the live audience reaction of their membership could adversely influence the opinions of the television audience. This would especially be the case if the television networks were allowed to cutaway to the live audience during the presentations by the candidates.

A member of your campaign staff may have already expressed this concern to you, but I wanted to put it forth just in case. Congratulations on your nomination. Your acceptance speech was great in both content and delivery. I hope you'll keep saying the same thing with the same enthusiasm everywhere. The message is the same that I have been delivering to others in your behalf. Its a message that can win for us in November, not only your election, but the election of congressional candidates challenging incumbent Democrats. Please be aware that I am ready and willing to do whatever I can to assure you and Senator Dole a great victory in the fall.

Sincerely,

\* *Bill*

BILL GOODLING  
Member of Congress

BG:d1/p  
CC: Stuart Spencer  
Doug Bailey

RBG HAS SEEN

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

September 9, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: DICK CHENEY  
FROM: MIKE DUVAL  
SUBJECT: DEBATES - AUDIENCE

Dick, I think it's important to put in perspective the commonly-held opinion that the first debate is the whole ballgame. I suspect that this opinion rests on two premises:

First, the size of the viewing audience will appreciably diminish after the first debate.

Second, the voters' minds will tend to be made up by watching the first debate, and especially by press commentary following it, and this is not likely to be changed by the subsequent debates.

I think it would be a great mistake for us to approach our preparation for the 1976 debates by underestimating the importance of the second and third Presidential debates. As a factual matter, there is a real question in my mind as to whether or not the size of the audience will, in fact, diminish for the second and third debates. In 1960, the evidence is not clear on this point (see attached) and, in any event, the size of the audience we will have for all the 1976 debates will be enormous compared to any other campaign event, so it must be treated with the utmost seriousness.

If Daniel Yankelovich is correct in his assumption that about 56% of the electorate should be viewed as undecided, then we have to assume that all the debates are likely to have significant impact on the election. Furthermore, it is my personal opinion at this point that none of the debates individually will be decisive in terms of assessing the performance of the President and Carter.

In summary, I think we should maintain our maximum effort for all three debates, not just the first one.

cc: Bill Carruthers



*Mike*  
*I concur!*  
*Mike* *1/76*

Republican convention for an average of seven hours and thirty-two minutes.

The four debates, said Nielsen, reached eighty-nine per cent of television homes, attracting over one hundred million people in all, about seventy million for each debate. The audience data from the Nielsen surveys are presented in Table I.

TABLE I  
NIELSEN AUDIENCE DATA

	First Debate	Second Debate	Third Debate	Fourth Debate
<u>Nielsen Total Audience</u>				
Thousands of homes	30,013	27,979	28,792	
Per cent total TV homes	66.4%	61.9%	63.7%	
<u>Nielsen Average Audience</u>				
Thousands of homes	26,894	24,001	24,860	24,272
Per cent total TV homes	59.5%	53.1%	55.0%	
<u>Homes Using Television</u>	66.3%	59.5%	63.2%	
<u>Share of the Audience</u>	39.7%	39.2%	37.0%	

SOURCE: Nielsen Television Index, Reports of October 2, 1960 and October 16, 1960.

NOTE: Nielsen says of these figures that the appreciably higher-than-normal level of Homes Using Television at the time of the telecast (66.3%) indicated the exceptional interest in the debates.



### Sindlinger Audience

Sindlinger makes his national projections from personal interviews in selected countries throughout the nation. Sindlinger's figures are confined to persons twelve years of age and older. The size of the audience according to Sindlinger was:<sup>1</sup>

First Debate	69.1 million
Second Debate	70.2 million
Third Debate	60.4 million
Fourth Debate	70.3 million

### American Research Bureau Audience

The American Research Bureau's figures are national Arbitron ratings, obtained by a combination of metering devices and coincidental telephone calls in what they call a true national sample of United States television. The figures include persons of all ages. Note the discrepancy between Sindlinger and this report.<sup>2</sup>

First Debate	75 million
Second Debate	61 million
Third Debate	70 million
Fourth Debate	63 million



<sup>1</sup>"Sindlinger Surveys," Broadcasting, November 7, 1960, pp. 27-29.

<sup>2</sup>"How Big a TV Audience the 'Great Debates' Drew," Broadcasting, November 7, 1960, p. 29.

TABLE 11—2. PER CENT OF ADULTS VIEWING (OR LISTENING TO) DEBATES<sup>a</sup>

Study No.	Name and Locale	First Debate	Second Debate	Third Debate	Fourth Debate	One or More	All 4	Remarks
3	California Poll (state)	65						Registered voters
4	Canadian Broadcasting				54 (weighted)			% of TV households
5	Carter (local)	81	76	67	61			
6	Creative Research Associates (local)		71	64	64			
7	Deutschmann (local)	75						44% stayed tuned throughout
9A	Gallup (natl.)	60				80		Registered voters
14	Kraft (natl.) <sup>b</sup>	65	66	65		87		
18	Minnesota					88		
20	Nielsen <sup>c</sup> (natl.)	66	62	64	60	90		% of TV households viewing 6 minutes or more

21	Opinion Research Corp. (natl.)	66	49	51	49			1st debate viewing only; others viewing plus listening
22	Roper (natl.)				56	83	30	Viewing only ("seen on television")
23	Schwerin (local)	65	47	47	59			
25	Sindlinger (natl.)	66	69	58	61			12 yrs. or older; approx. 45% stayed tuned throughout each debate
27	Survey Research Center (natl.)					79		
28	Tannenbaum (local)	87						

- a. Viewing plus listening unless otherwise noted (see Remarks). Approximately 10% of total are listeners rather than viewers.
- b. Figures for debates 2 and 3 on the assumption that those (about 1/3) who could not be contacted watched or did not watch in same proportions as those who were contacted.
- c. An estimate of proportion of total population viewing may be obtained by using the Nielsen estimate of total individual viewers. Percentaging these on a base of 129 million (population of 12 years and over) gives figures of 60%, 62%, 64%, 54% for the four debates respectively.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 9, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: DICK CHENEY  
FROM: MIKE DUVAL *Mike*  
SUBJECT: DEBATES - AUDIENCE



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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

October 1, 1976

FOR            MIKE DUVAL  
FROM:         BILL CARRUTHERS

For your information.

Attachments

RATINGS FOR FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE  
(Three Networks Combined)

	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Households (In Millions)</u>
9:30-10:00 P.M. E.D.T.	57.6	41.01
10:00-10:30 P.M. E.D.T.	55.9	39.80
10:30-11:00 P.M. E.D.T.	52.7	37.52
11:00-11:30 P.M. E.D.T.	48.0	34.18



*File*

10/18/76

Mike

Helen Collins called with the following information:

NEW YORK

Normal three network combined share is 68

Last Thursday it was-----53  
(this is considered pretty good)

LOS ANGELES

We don't know what their normal is

Last Thursday it was-----50



CHICAGO

We don't know what their normal is

Last Thursday it was-----39  
(this is considered good)

P