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6 ZCZC 001 PD NEW YORK NY SEPT. 13
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9 PRESIDENT GERALD FORD (PLEASE DELIVER URGENTLY)
10 THE WHITE HOUSE
11 WASHINGTON, D.C.
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15 DEAR PRESIDENT FORD:

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18 CBS NEWS URGENTLY REQUESTS THAT YOU REVERSE YOUR POSITION AND AGREE
19 TO PERMIT THE TELEVISION AUDIENCE TO SEE AND HEAR THE INVITED
20 AUDIENCES PRESENT AT THE FORTHCOMING LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS DEBATES.
21 THE LEAGUE, AT A MEETING TODAY, INDICATED THAT IT WOULD TAKE A
22 NEUTRAL POSITION ON THIS ISSUE, AND IF BOTH CANDIDATES AGREE THE
23 AUDIENCE CAN BE SEEN AND HEARD, THEN IT TOO WOULD AGREE.

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8 WE WISH TO EMPHASIZE IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS THE IMPORTANCE
9 OF THIS ISSUE. A MATTER OF JOURNALISTIC PRINCIPLE AND ETHICS
10 OF VERY GREAT MAGNITUDE IS AT STAKE, INVOLVING THE INDEPENDENCE OF
11 NEWS COVERAGE AND NEWS JUDGEMENT BY BROADCAST JOURNALISTS.
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15 TO REQUIRE US, AS THE PRICE OF COVERAGE, TO AGREE TO A RESTRICTION
16 SUCH AS THIS -- TO REQUIRE US TO IGNORE AN INTEGRAL PART OF A NEWS
17 EVENT AND PRETEND IT DOES NOT EXIST -- WOULD CONSTITUTE NOT ONLY
18 AN ACT OF PRIOR CENSORSHIP BUT WOULD STRIP US OF THE RIGHT TO MAKE
19 THOSE INDEPENDENT NEWS JUDGEMENTS CENTRAL TO A FREE AND VIGOROUS
20 PRESS.
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24 . IT WOULD CREATE THE MOST DANGEROUS PRECEDENTS, NOT ONLY
25 AT HOME BUT ABROAD, WHERE WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY RESISTED ALL ATTEMPTS

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6 TO CONTROL OR LIMIT OUR COVERAGE. YET THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT THE
7 PROHIBITION ON AUDIENCE REACTION COMPRISES, AN ATTEMPT TO LIMIT
8 AND CONTROL COVERAGE.
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12 WE REGARD THE DEBATES AS A MOST IMPORTANT NEWS EVENT AND A MOST
13 VALUABLE PUBLIC SERVICE. WE SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO COVER IT IN
14 THE SAME MANNER WE COVER ALL NEWS EVENTS WITHOUT CENSORSHIP OR
15 RESTRICTION. WE WISH ONLY TO DO OUR JOBS IN THE MANNER THE PUBLIC
16 HAS COME TO EXPECT OF US.
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21 RICHARD S. SALANT
22 PRESIDENT, CBS NEWS
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