

Answers to Questions for the Record
Confirmation Hearing of Christine A. Varney
Before the Senate Judiciary Committee
March 10, 2009

Questions from Senator Diane Feinstein

American newspapers are currently facing severe economic problems. Last month, the *Rocky Mountain News* closed its doors, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* ended its print edition today, and the *Tucson Citizen* is expected to stop production soon. In California, the *San Francisco Chronicle* has cut its staff by more than 50% in the past decade and may not survive if it does not make drastic cost reductions in the coming months. I think it is a real problem for cities to lose their major newspapers. Newspapers provide timely reporting on major events, publish careful analysis of matters of public importance, and offer a critical space for informed public debate.

1. As the Assistant Attorney General for the Antitrust Division, what factors will you consider when you review mergers and other business strategies that are aimed at keeping newspapers viable?

Answer: I pledged during my confirmation hearing to ensure that the antitrust laws are vigorously enforced. I believe any merger, regardless of the industry, must be reviewed with rigor. If I am confirmed as Assistant Attorney General for Antitrust, you can be assured that careful thought, along with attention to facts, industry dynamics, and economic theory, will be part of any merger analysis. At the same time, I also understand the current plight of American newspapers, the competition they face today, and the effects of the current recession on them. In addition, I am familiar with the aims of the Newspaper Preservation Act its idea of maintaining editorial voices. With this in mind, if confirmed, I look forward to reviewing these issues with Division staff, with an eye to reaching the right balance on such issues.