



Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House

March 16, 2009

The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder:

I am writing about the conditions news organizations across the country are experiencing in their efforts to survive. This is prompted not only by the serious economic challenges facing my constituents in San Francisco, including *The San Francisco Chronicle* and other news organizations in the Bay Area, but also by major news organizations across the country.

I am sure you agree that a strong, free, and independent press is vital for our democracy and for informing our citizens, especially news organizations that devote resources to gathering news. Our newspapers and news media must be able to engage in investigative journalism and to analyze significant issues, so citizens are informed of public policy issues and public officials are held accountable. As a recent New York Times story on the threats facing the industry noted: "For more than two centuries, newspapers have been the indispensable source of public information and a check on the abuses of government and other powerful interests." (See Richard Pérez-Peña, *As Cities Go from Two Papers to One, Talk of Zero*, N.Y. Times, March 12, 2009).

Given the significance of this issue to our democracy, the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts and Competition Policy will soon hold a hearing and discuss its implications for antitrust policy.

Over the years, antitrust laws have been an essential protector of competitive choice in the newspaper business, both for keeping members of the public informed and for enabling advertisers to reach them. The antitrust laws are every bit as vital in this industry as elsewhere in our economy, and perhaps more so given the First Amendment issues that are also at stake. I am confident that the Antitrust Division, in assessing any concerns that any proposed mergers or other arrangements in the San Francisco area might reduce competition, will take into appropriate account, as relevant, not only the number of daily and weekly newspapers in the Bay Area, but also the other sources of news and advertising outlets available in the electronic and digital age, so that the conclusions reached reflect current market realities. This is consistent with antitrust enforcement in recent years under both Republican and Democratic

Administrations. And the result will be to allow free market forces to preserve as many news sources, as many viewpoints, and as many jobs as possible.

We must ensure that our policies enable our news organizations to survive and to engage in the news gathering and analysis that the American people expect. Thank you for your consideration.

with best regards,


NANCY PELOSI