

other U.S. officials as a result of the investigation, and when any such conclusions or findings were reported.

On Sunday, you stated that "there is now a lot of revisionism that says, there was disagreement on this data point, or disagreement on that data point." I disagree strongly with this characterization. I am not raising questions about the validity of an isolated "data point," and the issue is not whether the war in Iraq was justified or not.

What I want to know is the answer to a simple question: Why did the President use forged evidence in the State of the Union address? This is a question that bears directly on the credibility of the United States, and it should be answered in a prompt and forthright manner, with full disclosure of all the relevant facts.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

HENRY A. WAXMAN,  
Ranking Minority Member.

### MEDICARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, both houses of Congress are continuing the difficult task of drafting comprehensive Medicare reform legislation this week.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to keep moving forward in the spirit of compromise on this extremely important issue.

Mr. Speaker, as time passes, the expectations of our constituencies continue to grow. We cannot return to our respective districts on the Fourth of July without some news of progress in the halls of Congress on a prescription drug plan for our seniors through Medicare.

Our colleagues in the other body have set the goal of reaching an agreement by the next recess, and I strongly urge my colleagues in this body to work on a bipartisan basis in order to reach a compromise.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a partisan issue and we can not allow it to fail because of partisan differences.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN).

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Lincoln Echo Newspaper for 10 years of service to Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Last week, the Lincoln Echo celebrated its 10-year anniversary. It began with the mission of unifying Fort Smith's African-American community. When the paper was sold in 2001, its mission statement changed to reflect the changes in Fort Smith. Their new aim became to unify Fort Smith's diverse communities.

Their work has been noticed not only in Fort Smith but around the country, reaching over 25,000 readers in 29 different States. This paper has preached the importance of unity in our neighborhoods and continuously relays a positive message to all of its readers.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Napoleon Black, Allen Black, Jr., Cecil Greene, Jr., and everyone involved in the Echo's success. I look forward to many more years of success for the Lincoln Echo.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCHROCK).

Mr. SCHROCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, the capital markets do not much care for indecision. When a company or industry is in regulatory flux, the industry is basically forced to be at a standstill. That is what is happening today with the telecommunications industry.

The Federal Communications Commission voted on February 20, 2003 to make changes to the way it regulates telecommunications carriers. Many of the changes were very significant, but the FCC is dragging its feet. These decisions will drive the short and long term future of the telecom industry. The industry, however, is stymied because the FCC, while having voted on the issue, has yet to issue the rules. This is quite unusual as texts of orders are issued usually within weeks or even days of the date that the item is voted on.

Here we are, almost 4 months later, and we still have no rules issued. It takes less time for a pig from time of conception to time of birth than it has taken the FCC to give birth to the written words embodying the agreements voted on in February.

The FCC needs to stop this nonsensical delay and issue its orders so the industry can get back to the business of building infrastructure and serving the telecommunications users of this Nation.

### SAVE OUR FORESTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration is about to open up our national forests to a new phase of road building. Now, in preparation for commenting on this, I had my staff check because the last time I had checked with the Forest Service, they had an 8 billion, not million, \$8 billion backlog on maintenance on Federal forest roads. Hundreds of thousands of miles of road, crisscrossing the United States, the West, and yet they have an \$8 billion backlog.

Now, the Forest Service said yesterday said, no, no, no, the Congressman is wrong. It is not 8 billion. We just recalculated it. And I thought, well, this will be good news. It is \$10.5 billion. The Forest Service has a \$10.5 billion backlog on Forest Service roads. Of the 382,000 miles of roads, only 21 percent meet their maintenance standards; 50 percent are declared unsafe for driving; and 50,000 miles of roads are missing

from the data. They are unclassified. They might be there. They might not. They might be passable; they might not. They have not had a chance to go out and look lately. Yet they are proposing under the Bush administration to begin a new phase of road building. Well, how is that?

Well, we heard a couple of weeks ago they will uphold the Clinton Roadless Rule. And I had some folks in Oregon say to me, We cannot believe that the Bush administration will uphold the Clinton roadless rule. And I said, Well, there were an incredible number of comments on that rule, over 2.2 million, over 600 public meetings. It was hard fought, well constructed, well thought out, and it was very popular among most folks in the western United States. And yet, I said, it does seem unusual.

Well, it turns out, no, they are not really going to uphold the roadless rule. They will immediately put in place exceptions for the Chugach and the Tongass Forests in Alaska, 300,000 acres. Except 300,000 acres of timber harvest with roads in the Tongass Forest will affect well over a million acres of land with fragmentation and eroding and other problems, perhaps even more. And, of course, there is the expense that comes with that. And then in the Lower 48 they will have a national policy, sort of, except they will develop an exception process where Governors can ask for exceptions on Federal lands for the roadless rule.

What kind of national policy is this?

At the same time they are staring in the face of an over \$10 billion backlog, which they have no intention of dealing with because, of course, there is no money to deal with thinning or fire protection or even fighting forest fires, and particularly low on the totem pole is road construction. Every year the road maintenance unanimous money is stolen and used to fight fires, and they do not put the money back, and they never get around to it; and the backlog has grown by \$2 billion since this President has been in office.

The roads are unsafe. They are crumbling. They are causing all sorts of problems with erosion into pristine streams. They need culvert work. They will erode worse without the culvert work. And yet this administration wants to go on another road-building binge to fragment up the little bit of remaining roadless area in the United States. Just like Gale Norton recently said that all of the wilderness areas under study by the BLM would no longer be studied for wilderness value. The Forest Service, under the direction of this administration, wants to make certain they put in enough roads before this President leaves office, to fragment that up so those areas can never again be considered for roadless or wildness designation.

This is wrong-headed policy at the wrong time. This administration should do what it said it was going to do, uphold the roadless rule in all of