



**Thomas Perez – Nominee for Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice**

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is the principal legal authority tasked with enforcing federal fair housing laws, and it has both a clear mandate and wide discretion with respect to fair housing enforcement. Unfortunately, in recent years, DOJ has not met its responsibilities. The National Commission on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, co-chaired by former HUD Secretaries Jack Kemp and Henry Cisneros, released its report in December 2008 assessing the state and future of fair housing in America. One of the recommendations of the Commission was a renewed vigor and commitment to civil rights enforcement by the Department of Justice. In 2008, DOJ filed only 33 fair housing cases. The low number of cases DOJ handled was not due to a decline in civil rights violations; on the contrary, the Commission reported that more than 4 million instances of fair housing violations occur each year.

Our housing market cannot wait any longer for a commitment to fair housing enforcement. In the realm of mortgage lending, the Civil Rights Division has not recognized nor prosecuted discriminatory practices within the subprime market. It also did little to induce or require conventional lenders to operate within minority communities. **In 2008, DOJ filed only one case based on mortgage lending discrimination.**

Tom Perez is the right choice to lead this effort as the Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division at the Justice Department. He is an experienced civil rights lawyer and public servant with first-hand experience in civil rights law and policy. He is dedicated to public service, having spent ten years at the Civil Rights Division at DOJ, served as Head of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, President of Montgomery County, Maryland Council, Special Counsel to Senator Edward Kennedy, and currently as Maryland Secretary of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.

With respect to civil rights, Mr. Perez has extensive experience prosecuting vigorously for the Civil Rights Division of DOJ. There, he handled cases of misconduct, racial violence, white supremacists, neo-Nazism, racially motivated arsons, cross burning and numerous police brutality and misconduct cases nationwide.

With regards to the foreclosure and financial crisis, Mr. Perez understands these issues and has the expertise to lead the Civil Rights Division's investigation and enforcement of civil rights and other laws that can stem abuses in the financial sector. In fact, Mr. Perez is Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley's point person on foreclosure prevention and has been working on fair housing issues from a state perspective for the past two years.

The nation needs an Assistant Attorney General with experience who is respected for his capabilities and integrity, and who will restore the Division to its mission of enforcing the law and hiring attorneys without regard to politics. The National Fair Housing Alliance supports the confirmation of Thomas Perez as U.S. Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.

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