

ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY GENERAL THOMAS PERRELLI TO LEAVE DOJ IN MARCH

The guy in charge of—among other things—the elusive foreclosure fraud settlement with the banksters just told NPR’s Carrie Johnson he’ll be leaving in March.

Associate Attorney General Tom Perrelli will leave the third highest-ranking post at the Justice Department in March after nearly three years managing a bustling portfolio that has run the gamut from mortgage abuses and the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico to stamping out domestic violence in Indian country.

Perrelli, 45, says that he’ll take several months off to spend with his growing family. He and his wife have a five-year-old, a two-year-old, and a pair of twins due in May. “This is the best job I’ll ever have,” Perrelli tells us, “you really couldn’t ask for better.” But, long hours spent overseeing Justice Department units that handle tax, civil rights, environment, antitrust, civil cases and billions of dollars in federal grant programs has taken “an enormous amount of energy and commitment and sacrifice.”

As Johnson points out, Perrelli has had his fingers in a number of contentious issues: the Cobell settlement and the BP investigation. But I suspect it also sets a finite deadline for the foreclosure fraud settlement, rumored to be imminent for about a year.

One of his biggest efforts has yet to come to fruition. For more than a year, the Justice Department and state

attorneys general have been hammering out a settlement with the country's largest mortgage servicing companies over faulty paperwork and foreclosure abuses known as "robo signing" that helped push people out of their homes. The process has been complicated and sometimes fractious, as top lawyers for the state of California and New York criticized the process as going too soft on the banks.

And then, of course, there's the question of a replacement—because there's no way Republicans are going to confirm anyone for a functional post at a Department of Justice they like to claim is responsible for sending guns to Mexican drug cartels.

Just what this country needs, a DOJ even more hampered by missing key operational executives.