

Thomas E. Perez, nominated by President Obama to serve as the Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division, was sworn in on October 8, 2009. Since then, Mr. Perez has worked to restore and transform the Division, in the spirit of its traditional role as the “conscience of the nation,” to further fulfill the promise of our nation’s most treasured laws – advancing equal opportunity, leveling the playing field, and protecting the rights of all.

Mr. Perez has spent his entire career in public service. Prior to his nomination, he served as the Secretary of Maryland’s Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation – an agency that safeguards critical consumer and worker protections – and was a principal architect of a sweeping reform package to address his state’s foreclosure crisis. In 2002, he became the first Latino elected to the Montgomery County Council, serving with distinction until 2006.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Perez spent 12 years in federal public service, mainly as a career attorney in the Civil Rights Division he now leads. In that role, he prosecuted, or supervised the prosecution of, some of the Division’s highest-profile civil rights cases, including a hate crimes case in Texas involving a group of white supremacists who went on a deadly, racially motivated crime spree. Mr. Perez later served as Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights under Attorney General Janet Reno, chairing the interagency Worker Exploitation Task Force, which oversaw a variety of initiatives designed to protect vulnerable workers. He also served as Special Counsel to the late Senator Edward Kennedy, acting as Senator Kennedy’s principal adviser on civil rights, criminal justice and constitutional issues. For the final two years of the Clinton administration, Mr. Perez served as the Director of the Office for Civil Rights at the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Mr. Perez, who has been a law professor at University of Maryland School of Law and a part-time professor at the George Washington School of Public Health, received a Bachelor’s degree from Brown University in 1983, a Master’s of Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government in 1987, and a Juris Doctorate from Harvard Law School in 1987. Mr. Perez lives in Maryland with his wife, Ann Marie Staudenmaier, an attorney with the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, and their three children.