

Legislators Ask Feds to Investigate Florida Attorney General Bondi's Alleged Ouster of ForeclosureGate AG Attorneys

By Rosa Schechter

August 04, 2011

This week two Florida Legislators, Representative Darren Soto and State Senator Eleanor Sobel, officially requested that the federal government become involved in yet another growing controversy here in Florida involving ForeclosureGate.

Florida legislators ask DOJ and Congress to Investigate Clarkson and Edwards Exit from Florida AG's Office

Soto and Sobel have asked that the Department of Justice and Congress (through correspondence with Senator Bill Nelson and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder) look into allegations that two Assistant Attorneys General, June Clarkson and Theresa Edwards were fired - or forced to resign - because of political motivations.

Seems that Soto and Sobel are not happy with the recent announcement by Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi that an independent inspector general will investigate the Clarkson-Edwards exit, and that Florida Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater's inspector general would take on that job.

What's the Concern? Undue Influence by Special Interests

Clarkson and Edwards were the top Foreclosure Fraud investigators for the State of Florida until they were asked to leave their employment as Assistant Attorneys General. They had overseen ForeclosureGate investigations under both Pam Bondi and her predecessor, Bill McCollum.

Until recently, they had received good job evaluations. However, it has been reported that they were asked to quit or face being fired after problems with their work were discovered by Richard Lawson, director of the Economic Crimes unit.

The controversy surrounds not only their past record of above-average job performance reviews but a suggestion by some that they were doing such a good job that they were booted because of political pressure. Specifically, there is talk that the two women were a problem for two companies they had deemed "mortgage mills": Jacksonville's Lender Processing Services and Tampa's ProVest.

Two Sides To the Story - The Truth Will Out

Bottom line, one camp is forming that believes these two attorneys were so fierce in their efforts to expose foreclosure fraud in Florida and elsewhere that they became thorns in the sides of two powerful mortgage servicers, who used their power to get them removed from their jobs. Undoubtedly, this camp will be looking into the campaign contributions made to Pam Bondi as well as other connections between the two "mortgage mills" and those responsible for firing the women.

The other camp will be considering the arguments made by those who wanted to see these two women out the door. They will be investigating the possibility that overzealous actions, no matter how well-meaning, may have gone over the line and necessitated the two lawyers' departure. Even attorneys can be too aggressive, after all.

Right now, the bigger picture remains the State of Florida. We are living in serious times and we have enough serious controversies to resolve - including ForeclosureGate - without running rabbit trails or getting distracted by innuendo. Let the investigators do their thing, the truth will out soon enough.