



## Attorney General Holder to Step Down?

Attorney General Eric Holder announced on Thursday that he was unsure whether he would stay on as Attorney General through President Obama's second term. The announcement was made before law students at the University of Baltimore, [reported](#) CBS News.



"That's something that I'm in the process now of trying to determine," Holder commented. "I have to think about, can I contribute in a second term?"

According to Holder, his decision will follow discussions with his family and the president.

"[I have to] really ask myself the question about, do I think there are things that I still want to do? Do I have gas left in the tank? It's been an interesting and tough four years, so I really just don't know," he said.

Holder's entire tenure as attorney general has been clouded with controversy. He was found in [contempt](#) by the U.S. House of Representatives for refusing to submit documents pertinent to Operation Fast and Furious, a gunwalking operation that resulted in hundreds of Mexican deaths, as well as the death of U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry.

The House contempt vote was 255 to 67 with 17 Democrats breaking from their party to vote in favor of the contempt measure along with Republicans. A second resolution — the civil contempt charge that would authorize the House Oversight Committee to seek judgment in federal court requiring Holder to comply with subpoenas — passed by a vote of 258 to 95, with 21 Democrats voting with Republicans.

"It's important to remember how we got here," House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said during a speech ahead of the vote. "The Justice Department has not provided the facts and information we requested. ... It's our constitutional duty to find out."

Congress had been investigating the Fast and Furious operation for well over a year, and grew infuriated with Holder's refusal to adequately comply with the investigation. The *New York Post* explained,

Holder has provided 7,600 documents while the [House Government and Oversight] Committee has issued subpoenas asking for tens of thousands more over a botched federal program that resulted in guns getting into the hands of Mexican criminals.

Holder defended his refusal to hand over documents for the congressional investigation by asserting that it would violate the "separation of powers."

In addition to the scandal surrounding Holder's connection to Operation Fast and Furious, his [refusal](#) to prosecute members of the New Black Panthers who were guilty of voter intimidation during the 2008 presidential elections was also highly controversial. The Obama administration had initially filed suit against the New Black Panthers and launched an investigation into those members who stood outside a Philadelphia polling place in 2008 holding billy clubs, dressed in military attire, hurling racial epithets



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at voters. The Department of Justice had won a default judgment against several of the New Black Panther members when they failed to appear at their hearing in April 2009.

But one month later, the DOJ moved to dismiss the charges against one of the Black Panthers, citing insufficient evidence. For the Black Panther holding the nightstick in the video, the Justice Department pursued an injunction, which simply barred him from visiting a Philadelphia polling station for two years.

The entire case sparked controversy and caused some to question Attorney General Eric Holder's discretion. The controversy was heightened when a former Justice Department attorney, J. Christian Adams, accused the Justice Department of playing race politics by failing to prosecute the new Black Panthers simply because they were minorities. Adams claimed that the DOJ was admittedly unwilling to prosecute cases in which the assailants were non-white. According to Adams, the DOJ bore "open hostility toward equal enforcement in a colorblind way" of the voting rights laws.

*Human Events* also [reported](#) that Holder was facing questions for his failure to disclose financial ties to a controversial abortion doctor in Georgia who had been indicted for Medicare fraud. Documents received by Watchdog.org showed that Holder had failed to disclose the fact that his wife owned the building where the doctor had operated.

In doing so, Holder may have been in violation of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, which mandates that high-level federal officials "disclose publicly their personal financial interests to ensure confidence in the integrity of the federal government by demonstrating that they are able to carry out their duties without compromising the public trust."

That law also necessitates the disclosure of the "holdings of and income from the holdings of any trust, estate, investment fund or other financial arrangement from which income is received by, or with respect to which a beneficial interest in principal or income is held by, the filer, his spouse, or dependent child."

"If the Justice Department keeps ignoring its job, Eric Holder could be the only attorney general to leave office as the subject of more investigations than he's headed up," joked Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council.

It is not unusual for presidential administrations to undergo cabinet changes in a second term. And even before Obama won reelection, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner announced that they would be moving on.

Still, the White House has been largely quiet regarding the potential for staff changes.

"The personnel issues will be dealt with appropriately," said Obama senior adviser David Plouffe.

But according to the [Boston Herald](#), a possible replacement for Eric Holder's position is Massachusetts Democratic Governor Deval Patrick.

As tensions flared between Holder and members of the U.S. House over Operation Fast and Furious, the *Boston Herald* reported, "Attorney General Eric Holder's Fast and Furious guns scandal woes could prove to be a career opportunity for Gov. Deval Patrick, if the nation's beleaguered top lawman finds himself on the outs, pundits told the *Herald*."

Patrick was one of the considerations for the U.S. attorney general position back in 2008, but at the time, he was in the middle of his first term as Massachusetts governor.



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Patrick's office has [confirmed](#) that he and his wife will be having a "social dinner tonight with the president at the White House."

*Photo: In this June 11, 2012, file photo, Attorney General Eric Holder speaks at the League of Women Voters National Convention in Washington: AP Images*



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