

## Iowa AG Miller vows to put financial criminals in jail

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Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller, the lead attorney general in the 50-state foreclosure investigation, told homeowners at risk of foreclosure today that he supports a settlement with the big banks that requires significant principal rate reductions, loan modifications, compensation for citizens defrauded of their homes and criminal prosecutions against big bank executives who broke the law.

"We will put people in jail," Miller said, in response to questions during a meeting Tuesday with more than 100 people from 15 states representing community, faith, and labor organizations, foreclosure victims and struggling homeowners from across the country.

"One of the main tools needs to be principal reductions, just like in the farm crisis in the 1980s," Miller said. "There should be some kind of compensation system for people who have been harmed. And the foreclosure process should stop while loan modifications begin. To have a race between foreclosures and modifications to see which happens first is insane."

Participants in the meeting urged Miller to make a strong settlement that includes loan modification and principal reduction as the primary tools for cleaning up the mortgage mess created by the banks.

Miller also agreed to continue to work with grassroots community, faith, and labor groups from across the country and agreed that the Bank Accountability Campaign's members are stakeholders who deserve a seat at the table.

"We are very pleased with how this meeting turned out and now our expectations are higher than ever," said Deacon Mike McCarthy, an Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (Iowa CCI) member from Des Moines.

"Attorney General Miller made it clear that he sees this investigation as a chance to clean up the foreclosure crisis that has ransacked our communities for over three years now and continues to push down housing values for everyone," McCarthy said. "He stated that loan modifications will be a core component in any settlement," said Gina Gates, with PACT-PICO in San Jose, California.

The group is staging protests this afternoon at the Wells Fargo Home Mortgage headquarters in West Des Moines and at branch of Bank of America in Des Moines to highlight the massive bonuses that bank executives will receive this month while millions of homeowners face foreclosure. They plan to lift up a new report showing that restoring equity to underwater homeowners would cost the big banks \$73 billion, approximately one-half this year's bonus & compensation pool. Similar protests will take place this week in New York and California.

The growing activity from homeowner groups comes amidst a turbulent time for big banks, especially Bank of America, with both investor lawsuits and the Attorneys General investigation pending, and some analysts beginning to predict the eventual need to restructure America's largest bank in 2011.

The meeting with Miller and other events this week are organized by PICO National Network, National People's Action, SEIU, Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment, Alliance for a Just Society, and IAF Southeast. For more information, visit [www.bankingonaneweconomy.org](http://www.bankingonaneweconomy.org).



Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller promises to prosecute those convicted of financial crimes, and to put them in jail if necessary. (AP Photo/Charlie Neibergall)