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United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

February 16, 2021

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Committee Members:

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) writes to you to urge you to confirm Vanita Gupta (Gupta) to be the Associate Attorney General of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ). NCADV is the nation's oldest national grassroots domestic violence organization, representing domestic violence programs and survivors directly. Established in 1978, our mission is to lead, mobilize, and raise our voices to support efforts that demand a change of conditions that lead to domestic violence such as patriarchy, privilege, racism, sexism, and classism. We are dedicated to supporting survivors and holding offenders accountable and supporting advocates.

Domestic violence impacts every person in America. With one in four women and one in ten men experiencing intimate partner violence,¹ everyone is acquainted with someone who has experienced violence – whether they know it or not. Black and Native women experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence,² and the systems that ought to protect them are often actively hostile. White supremacy is a feature of all these systems. Gupta has a demonstrated history of addressing racial bias, gender bias, and other forms of bias in these systems including during her tenure as the head of DOJ's Civil Rights Division.

Under Gupta's leadership, the Division actively pursued civil rights enforcement for survivors of gender-based violence and entered into consent agreements with the Missoula, MT and Baltimore, MD police departments to improve their response to sexual assault as well as securing consent decrees against more than a dozen law enforcement agencies to improve access to justice for people of color, LGBTQ people, and people in other marginalized communities. Under her direction, the Department of Justice published a guidance document for law enforcement, *Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias in Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence*,³ which was developed in collaboration with domestic violence and sexual assault advocates, law enforcement, and other stakeholders. Both the Office of Justice Programs and the Office on Violence Against Women provided grants to assist law enforcement agencies to implement the guidance – in conjunction with the domestic violence and sexual assault fields.

As head of DOJ's Civil Rights Division, Gupta earned a reputation as a person who could work across political and ideological divides. She recognizes the importance of convening stakeholders to collaboratively address societal issues, and she listens to the voices of the people who are impacted by

¹ Smith, S.G., Zhang, X., Basile, K.C., Merrick, M.T., Wang, J., Kresnow, M. & Chen, J. (2018). *The national intimate partner and sexual violence survey: 2015 data brief - updated release*. Atlanta: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/2015data-brief508.pdf>.

² Smith, S.G., Chen, J., Basile, K.C., Gilbert, L.K., Merrick, M.T., Patel, N., Walling, M., & Jain, A. (2017). *The national intimate partner and sexual violence survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 state report*. Atlanta: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>.

³ Department of Justice. (2015). *Identifying and preventing gender bias in law enforcement response to sexual assault and domestic violence*. United States Department of Justice. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/file/799316/download>.

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these issues. She is a strong advocate for justice and truly understands the dynamics that preclude many survivors from receiving justice.

In a letter to Congress, Gupta wrote, “Everyone deserves to live safe and healthy lives, free from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.”⁴ The woman who wrote this is a woman who has been and will continue to be a champion for victims and survivors, including those most marginalized in American society. Gupta’s confirmation as Associate Attorney General will ensure that survivors’ voices are heard and amplified at the highest levels of the Department of Justice.

Respectfully,

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

⁴ Gupta, V. & Lucius, K. (2019). *Vote yes on the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 (H.R. 1585); Oppose any motion to recommit or any amendments that weaken protections*. Retrieved from <https://civilrights.org/resource/vote-yes-on-the-violence-against-women-reauthorization-act-of-2019-h-r-1585-oppose-any-motion-to-recommit-or-any-amendments-that-weaken-protections/#>.