

February 25, 2021

Chairman Dick Durbin
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Ranking Member Chuck Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

As the President and Director of the Vera Institute of Justice, I write to support the nomination of Vanita Gupta to be Associate Attorney General. I have known Ms. Gupta since 1999, and I believe she is uniquely well-suited to serve at the highest echelons of the U.S. Department of Justice. Ms. Gupta has integrity, commitment to the rule of law, and experience working with those most impacted by the justice system that make her an ideal nominee.

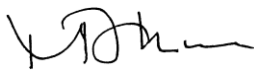
Since her work on the Tulia case in 2003, Ms. Gupta has carried a special understanding of how the American justice system can negatively impact entire communities and therefore requires rigorous standards and transparency at every level. Through her leadership and civil rights advocacy at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Ms. Gupta demonstrated a profound commitment to seeking justice for historically marginalized groups most in need of equal protection and treatment under the law. As the Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights during the Obama Administration, she made the protection of these communities her office's highest priority and will ensure that this is a top priority under the current administration.

Personally, Ms. Gupta has all of the necessary leadership attributes to guide Justice Department policies and practices and restore integrity and honor to the Department. She is a passionate and respectful advocate for democratic values and constitutional rights who both listens and speaks honestly, characteristics particularly in need to lead in our current political climate. Given her history of working constructively with both ally and adversary, she has earned the highest respect among a wide array of stakeholders, as well as across the aisle.

Ms. Gupta's leadership is especially critical at a time when Americans across the country have made clear that racial equity and a fair criminal justice system cannot wait any longer. Given the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to reforming the justice system and embedding equity goals across all federal agencies, her oversight of the Office of Justice Programs, the Office of Civil Rights, and the Office of Violence Against Women, among other Justice Department offices, is critical. She will ensure that the full weight of federal resources are directed at addressing structural racism, over-criminalization, and mass incarceration, as well as advancing needed change at the state and local level.

Vera looks forward to working with Ms. Gupta and the Department.

Sincerely,



Nicholas R. Turner
President & Director
Vera Institute of Justice