



March 11, 2021

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee
Washington DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of Everytown for Gun Safety, America's largest gun violence prevention organization, I write to express our support for the nominations of Vanita Gupta to be Associate Attorney General and Kristen Clarke to be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights.

At the same time that our nation is dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and the epidemic of gun violence, we are also confronting an overdue reckoning with the systemic racism and injustice that exists for too many Americans. Gun violence has a disproportionate impact on Black and Brown communities in this country, particularly in cities, which have experienced a dramatic spike in gun homicides over the past year. Confronting this reality will require innovative strategies and close cooperation between community leaders, advocates, and public officials at all levels of government and law enforcement. Everytown also believes that police violence is gun violence, and that law enforcement should be subject to reforms that address police brutality, prevent racial profiling, and hold officers accountable for unauthorized shootings. Confirming these nominees to the Department of Justice will help bring about the change that our nation desperately needs.

As a longtime civil rights leader and a former Acting Attorney General for Civil Rights during the Obama Administration, Ms. Gupta has significant experience with criminal justice and policing issues. She has worked to ensure communities of color were not disparately impacted by law enforcement policies and she secured successful reforms in police departments in Ferguson, Missouri, Chicago, Illinois and Baltimore, Maryland among others. Ms. Gupta has demonstrated a commitment to ending gun violence, especially after the mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton in 2019 when Ms. Gupta helped call attention to the growing threats of gun violence that disproportionately targeted the Latino community. If confirmed, Everytown believes that Ms. Gupta will use the resources of the offices and programs she will oversee to support evidence-informed interventions to gun violence. As our nation works to address growing injustice, Ms. Gupta's nomination would break barriers as the first woman of color to serve as Associate Attorney General.

Similarly, Ms. Clarke's experience and background will help her restore the Civil Rights Division's role as an important protector of the rights of every American. She currently serves as the President and Executive Director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. In that position, Ms. Clarke has led efforts to ensure policing accountability and fight discrimination. Ms. Clarke also led the Civil Rights Bureau in the New York State Attorney General's office and worked at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. As a former prosecutor at the Department of Justice, Ms. Clarke handled important cases related to police misconduct, hate crimes and voting rights - issues that will be at the forefront of the Civil Rights Division in the current Administration.

We are disappointed in some of the unwarranted criticism and mischaracterizations of their views and believe both will faithfully uphold the Constitution, including the rights secured under the Second Amendment. Despite attacks on their records, both Ms. Gupta and Ms. Clarke are eminently qualified and have demonstrated their willingness to work with stakeholders across the ideological spectrum to ensure the equal application of justice. In fact, Ms. Gupta enjoys broad support across the law enforcement community. We are confident that they would work in partnership with law enforcement to ensure greater transparency and accountability in reforming policing practices.

We are pleased to support the nominations of Vanita Gupta and Kristen Clarke and urge the Senate to act swiftly to confirm them. We appreciate your consideration of our views.

Respectfully submitted,

John Feinblatt
President, Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund