

March 3, 2021  
United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

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

On behalf of faith leaders representing the diversity of U.S. Christianity – including Latino Churches, Historic Black Churches, Protestants and Evangelicals, and Catholics – we write to express our strong support of Vanita Gupta to serve as the next Associate Attorney General at the United States Department of Justice (DOJ).

As faith leaders, we strongly believe in the inherent value and worth of every person as created in the image of God and equally deserving of fair treatment under the law. As the nation's top law enforcement agency, DOJ serves as an entity for advancing fair and impartial justice for everyone and a backstop for our fundamental civil rights. Therefore, we believe it is important that DOJ includes leaders committed to ending discrimination; addressing white supremacy and hate that leads to violence; and advance justice for all Americans. This noble vision is even more important at a time when our nation is contending with the deadly consequences of systemic racism and escalating acts of racial and religious bigotry, whether through suppressing the sacred right to vote, the criminal justice system, or other areas where justice has long been denied. Now, more than ever before, our elected and appointed leaders must be committed to a nation that is just and equitable for all people, especially those who are the most vulnerable. Attorney Vanita Gupta is the kind of leader who will help restore broad public confidence in the U.S. Department of Justice and provide effective and trustworthy leadership in this time.

Attorney Vanita Gupta has a long history of seeking justice for all Americans. In December 2015, while leading the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Gupta announced an initiative, in collaboration with 93 U.S. Attorneys offices nationwide and federal agency partners (including the White House, Department of Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Department of Homeland Security, and the F.B.I.), a community engagement initiative across the federal government to:

- Promote religious freedom
- Challenge religious discrimination
- Enhance government efforts to combat religious-based hate violence and crimes

Her office also led intensive hate crimes training with U.S. Attorneys nationwide, where she developed a reputation as a collaborative partner to address what was a dangerous spike in religious-based hate crimes.

Since then, she has continued her work to address religious-based violence in numerous ways, including the alarming spike of hate-related incidents over the past several years against Christian communities, Jewish communities, Muslim communities, Sikh communities, Asian communities, and other communities.

Gupta has indeed prioritized protecting people of all faiths through her work at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. The Leadership Conference was itself was founded in 1950 by

civil rights pioneers A. Philip Randolph, Arnold Aronson, and Roy Wilkins. Protecting religious faiths has been foundational to its core work, including, for example, protecting African American Christian worshippers in the deep south during that turbulent time in our country's history. Today, the Leadership Conference counts among its 210 national organizations numerous religious groups to give voice to ensure that ALL faiths are protected from discrimination and hate.

We have no doubt that Vanita Gupta is the right person to ensure the safety of our communities and strengthen our civil rights protections as Associate Attorney General. Her life work of seeking fairness and justice for all Americans will help to restore DOJ as an agency with a reputation of independence and integrity in the pursuit of justice. We strongly urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to quickly confirm Vanita Gupta as Associate Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Sincerely,

Bishop Claude Alexander, Pastor , The Park Church

Dr. Carroll Baltimore, Bishop, Global Alliance Interfaith Networks

Rev. Dr. William Barber, II, Pastor, Greenleaf Christian Church, Co-chair, Poor People's Campaign

Rev. Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister, United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Timothy Tee Boddie, Church Engagement Consultant, Sojourners

Rev. Walter Brueggemann, Minister, United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President, United Church of Christ

Mr. Joshua DuBois, CEO, Values Partnerships

Rev. Dr. Robert M. Franklin, President Emeritus, Morehouse College

The Rt. Rev. J. Christian Giesler, Bishop and Director of Mission Engagement, Moravian Church in North America

Rev. Dr. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, General Secretary Emeritus, Reformed Church in America

Dr. Arlee Griffin Jr, Pastor, Berean Baptist Church

Dr. Mimi Haddad, President, CBE International

Dr. Jeffrey Haggray, Executive Director, American Baptist Home Mission Societies

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale, Senior Pastor, Ray of Hope Christian Church (DOC)

Rev. Sekinah Hamlin, Minister for Economic Justice, United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Richard Hamm, Pastor, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Rev. Fred Harrell, Founder and Sr. Pastor, City Church San Francisco

Rev. Dr. Peter Heltzel, Visiting Researcher, Boston University School of Theology

Rev. Dr. Katharine Henderson, President, Auburn Seminary

Dr. Obery Hendricks, Visiting Scholar, Columbia University

Rev. Teresa Hord Owens, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada

Rev. Dr. Joel Hunter, Chair, Community Resource Network

Ms. Hyepin Im, President and CEO, Faith and Community Empowerment (formerly KCCD)

Pastor John K. Jenkins Sr., Pastor, First Baptist of Glenarden

Ms. Kathy Khang, Board vice chair, Christians for Social Action

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Kuan, President, Claremont School of Theology

Rev. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, General Superintendent, Emerita, The Wesleyan Church

Pastor Mayra Macedo-Nolan, Executive Director, Clergy Community Coalition

Rev. Carlos L Malave, Executive Director, Christian Churches Together

Rev. Michael Mata, Associate Pastor, Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene  
Rev. Dr. Walter McCray, President, National Black Evangelical Association  
Rev. Terrance M. McKinley, Director of Racial Justice, Sojourners and Senior Pastor, Campbell AME Church, Washington DC  
Bishop Darin Moore, Presiding Bishop, Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District AME Zion Church  
Senior Bishop Lawrence Reddick, Senior Bishop, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church  
Bishop Frank Reid, III, Bishop, The African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Bishop Adam J Richardson, Senior Bishop, African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Bishop Raymond Rivera, President, Latino Pastoral Action Center, Inc.  
Rev. Dr. Brenda Salter-McNeil, Associate Professor of Reconciliation Studies, Seattle Pacific Seminary  
Rev. Ron Stief, Executive Director, National Religious Campaign Against Torture  
Rev. Adam Russell Taylor, President, Sojourners  
Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, Associate General Minister, United Church of Christ  
Rev. Dr. A C "Tony" Ubalde Jr, President, Vallejo Board of Education  
Rev. Dr. Chanequa Walker-Barnes, Associate Professor of Practical Theology, Mercer University  
Rev. Jim Wallis, Founder and Ambassador, Sojourners  
Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Co-Convener, National African American Clergy Network  
Minister Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Director, School for Conversion