

February 3, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Letter in Support of Vanita Gupta, nominee for the United States Associate Attorney General

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We respectfully submit this letter on behalf of Vanita Gupta, the nominee for the United States Associate Attorney General.

As leaders in the bipartisan movement to reform our criminal justice system to better align with the goals of promoting limited government, personal responsibility, individual liberty, redemption, and workforce and family reintegration, we are pleased to share our view regarding nominee Vanita Gupta. While we come from different ideological backgrounds than Ms. Gupta, we have had the privilege and pleasure of working with Ms. Gupta over the years and can speak to both the strength of her intellect and her longtime commitment to work across the spectrum. Her work has helped find common ground on solutions supported by evidence to deliver safety and justice for all.

One of the early successes in Ms. Gupta's distinguished career involved her work as a public interest lawyer in the Tulia, Texas drug case in which 46 people were arrested in a fabricated drug case. Her tireless work helped expose this injustice which led to their exoneration. This landmark case also led to the disbanding of joint federal drug task forces that created federalism concerns as well as an incentive to maximize low-level drug prosecutions, and ultimately to pardons of these defendants by former Texas Gov. Rick Perry. While there are many excellent lifetime prosecutors in both political and career capacities at the U.S. Department of Justice, we think there is real value in also elevating leaders like Ms. Gupta who can bring rich perspectives from the other side of the docket. This is especially true for topics she has addressed in her career, such as indigent defense, prosecutorial ethics, wrongful convictions, the role of substance use disorders and mental illness, and civil asset forfeiture.

Through her extensive work on criminal justice issues, Ms. Gupta has shown herself to be an immensely important contributor and leader. She not only possesses valuable subject matter expertise on criminal justice issues ranging from juvenile justice to police and prison reform, but she is also a consensus-builder who is a wonderful partner to work alongside. Indeed, she has consistently sought cross-partisan consensus, and looked to data-driven analysis when exploring criminal justice reform efforts.

We are confident that she will bring this same approach to the U.S. Department of Justice, where as Associate Attorney General she will oversee numerous components, and work with numerous stakeholders, including Congress. Undoubtedly, all of us will not agree with every decision made by the Department of Justice in this administration, but we know Ms. Gupta will have an open door to our input. We also believe Ms. Gupta is precisely the kind of public servant who will thrive in such a role. She is a person of deep integrity, and we have no doubt that she will take seriously her service to the American people.

We urge the Judiciary Committee to swiftly advance Ms. Gupta's nomination favorably, and for the Senate to confirm her.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Marc Levin

Mark Holden

Jenny Kim

Vikrant Reddy

Brett L. Tolman

Shon Hopwood

Georgetown University Law Center

Arthur Rizer

Former Police Officer, Former Federal Prosecutor, Retired U.S. Army Officer

Jessica Nickel