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The Honorable Richard Durbin, Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley, Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: NOMINATION OF KRISTEN CLARKE FOR ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS**

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I write to urge your support for the nomination of Kristen Clarke to be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Justice. Each day, events in the news remind us just how significant the Civil Rights Division is to the common welfare of U.S. citizens. Whether we confront domestic terrorism, the proper use of police force, the guarantee of equal protection in the redistricting process, or the integrity of the ballot, we look to the Department of Justice to help protect and defend the essence of U.S. citizenship.

Kristen Clarke is a living example of what justice means to this nation. When she is confirmed, Ms. Clarke will be the first person of color and the first Senate-confirmed woman to lead the Civil Rights Division. For Black people, there is no federal agency more important to the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness. It is of paramount importance that the next leader of the Civil Rights Division demonstrates a belief in justice for all Americans.

Kristen Clarke is an incredibly accomplished civil rights lawyer who has devoted her entire career to advancing the cause of justice, beginning more than two decades in the Civil Rights Division's Honors program. Ms. Clark has been an advocate for due process and equal protection under the law across a broad spectrum of issues, without regard to partisan politics. She spent her first years as a lawyer with the Civil Rights Division under the George W. Bush administration, prosecuting hate crimes, domestic violence, human trafficking, police brutality, and voting rights cases.

Kristen Clarke served for four years as the Chief of the Civil Rights Bureau in the New York Attorney General's Office. She provided laudable leadership of civil rights enforcement in voting rights, fair housing and lending and anti-discrimination in the workplace. She also worked to



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address barriers to reentry for individuals with criminal convictions, the school-to-prison pipeline, and police misconduct, including overseeing preparation of a comprehensive report regarding the New York City Police Department's Stop and Frisk Program.

In addition to her prosecutorial experience, Kristen Clarke currently serves as president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, which was established at the request of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 to engage the legal profession to protect of civil rights. Over the course of her career, Ms. Clarke has developed an incredible amount of litigation experience fighting hate and advocating for people with disabilities, LGBTQ rights, education, housing, voting rights and environmental justice. She led efforts to ban hate speech on social media platforms and won a lawsuit against one white supremacist website and shut down numerous others.

At this critical hour, our nation urgently needs a woman with Kristen Clarke's demonstrated expertise and commitment to a vision of robust civil rights enforcement at the Justice Department. Former colleagues say Clarke's experience, both as a Justice Department lawyer and as executive director of a large civil rights organization, make her qualified to tackle the challenge. "If you were inventing a nominee from scratch... you'd come up with Kristen or someone very, very close," said Justin Levitt, a former colleague who teaches law at Loyola Law School. Her unique combination of talents, experience and skills uniquely qualify her to chart our nation's path toward the promise of equal justice under law. The Senate should confirm her as quickly as possible.

For more than 85 years, The National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) has been a voice for women of African descent, their families, and communities. Thank you for your consideration of this message. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact me at (202) 870-2870.

Most Sincerely,

Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Ph. D.
National President and Chair of the Board
National Council of Negro Women, Inc.