



February 25, 2021

**SUPPORT THE CONFIRMATION OF KRISTEN CLARKE  
TO BE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR CIVIL RIGHTS**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights – a coalition of more than 220 national organizations committed to promoting and protecting the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States – and the 118 undersigned organizations, we write to express our strong support for the confirmation of Kristen Clarke to serve as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

Ms. Clarke leads one of our nation’s premier civil rights organizations – the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law – and she has been a strong champion of civil rights throughout her distinguished career. The Lawyers’ Committee is a member of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and we have worked closely with Ms. Clarke during her tenure as the Lawyers’ Committee’s president and executive director. In that capacity, Ms. Clarke also served on the Board of Directors for The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. It is because of her extensive civil rights record and our close work with Ms. Clarke that we are confident that the Justice Department and the nation would benefit tremendously from her leadership, knowledge, and experience. Ms. Clarke would be the first woman in history to be confirmed by the Senate as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the Justice Department.

Ms. Clarke has spent her entire 20-year career fighting for civil rights and racial justice. After graduating from Harvard University and Columbia Law School, she was selected for the Attorney General’s Honors Program and spent her first six years as a career attorney in the Civil Rights Division – the same office she has now been nominated to lead. She worked in the Division’s Voting Section and handled voting rights and redistricting cases, and she also worked in the Division’s Criminal Section, where she prosecuted police misconduct and brutality cases, hate crimes, and human trafficking cases. Having served as a career attorney in the Division, Ms. Clarke will bring a deep knowledge of the office’s mission and the urgency of aggressively enforcing our nation’s federal civil rights laws.

In 2006, Ms. Clarke went to work for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), a litigating organization that has helped lead the fight for racial justice in America for the past 80 years. Ms. Clarke helped lead LDF’s litigation on voting rights and election law, and she helped defend the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act in federal court. In 2011, Ms. Clarke was appointed to head the Civil Rights Bureau of the New York State Attorney General’s Office, where she led broad civil rights enforcement on matters including criminal justice issues, police reform, education and housing



discrimination, fair lending, barriers to reentry, voting rights, immigrants' rights, gender equality, disability rights, reproductive rights, and LGBTQ equality.

In 2016, Ms. Clarke began her tenure as president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, one of the country's largest and most important national civil rights organizations dedicated to the pursuit of equal justice for all. The work of the Lawyers' Committee has always been critical, but never more so than over the past four years, when civil rights organizations have had to take up the mantle of enforcing our federal civil rights laws in the absence of enforcement by the Justice Department under the previous administration. Under Ms. Clarke's leadership, the Lawyers' Committee has served as an essential bulwark in defending civil rights when the Justice Department refused to do so, working through litigation and legislative advocacy to fight hate and bias and to protect and promote voting rights and elections, racial justice, economic justice, educational opportunities, fair housing, criminal justice, digital justice, gender justice, and a fair and accurate census. During her tenure, the organization filed more than 250 cases to safeguard civil rights nationwide.

The breadth and scope of Ms. Clarke's civil rights record is without parallel. Her substantial professional accomplishments span from our nation's leading civil rights organizations to federal and state government service. Her extensive litigation experience and strong leadership skills are necessary to effectively lead the Civil Rights Division today. Her experience defending access to the ballot is especially notable. She has been involved in virtually all of the Voting Rights Act cases that have been brought in the modern era, including *Shelby County v. Holder*.

Ms. Clarke is universally respected. In announcing his intent to nominate Ms. Clarke, President Biden rightfully described her as "one of the most distinguished civil rights attorneys in America."<sup>1</sup> Former U.S. District Judge Shira Scheindlin observed: "Kristen Clarke is a force of nature. She has been working tirelessly, around the clock, morning, noon and night to ensure that all Americans share the same rights and privileges as equal members of our society. Without her commitment, past, present and future we would not be confident that this promise would be fulfilled. But with her leadership at the Department of Justice, we can again believe in a just future."<sup>2</sup> Sherrilyn Ifill, the president and director-counsel of LDF, noted: "Ms. Clarke has led one of the country's most important civil rights organizations, including its national Election Protection voter protection coalition, which has helped to protect the vote and ensure access to the ballot box for millions of voters. Ms. Clarke will undoubtedly understand the priorities needed for the division at this critical moment."<sup>3</sup> And Sheila Katz, CEO of the National Council of Jewish Women, said: "as the leader of one of this country's most important civil rights organizations, Kristen Clarke has devoted her life to the pursuit of equal justice for all. Her efforts to combat discrimination throughout her career have helped to strengthen our democracy."<sup>4</sup>

President Biden made an outstanding choice in nominating Kristen Clarke to be the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, and we urge the Senate to confirm Ms. Clarke as quickly as possible. The Civil Rights Division is in desperate need of a course correction, and Ms. Clarke is an ideal person to right the ship.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
A. Philip Randolph Institute  
ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services)  
Advancement Project National Office  
AFL-CIO  
Alliance for Justice  
Alliance For Youth Action  
American Association for Justice  
American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Humanist Association  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)  
Americans for Financial Reform  
Americans United for Separation of Church & State  
America's Voice  
Anti-Defamation League  
Arab American Institute  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC  
Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote  
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
Brady  
Center for American Progress  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
Center for Disability Rights  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for Responsible Lending  
Center for Public Representation  
Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism, California State University, San Bernardino  
Clearinghouse On Women's Issues  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Constitutional Accountability Center  
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)  
Daily Kos  
Demand Justice  
Demos  
Drug Policy Alliance  
Earthjustice  
End Citizens United//Let America Vote Action Fund  
Equal Justice Society

Fair Elections Center  
Family Equality  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
Free Speech For People  
Freedom From Religion Foundation  
Futures Without Violence  
Generation Progress  
Girls for Gender Equity  
Hispanic Federation  
Human Rights Campaign  
Indivisible  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies  
Justice for Migrant Women  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
Lambda Legal  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
Lawyers for Good Government (L4GG)  
League of Conservation Voters  
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)  
MALDEF  
March For Our Lives  
Matthew Shepard Foundation  
Muslim Advocates  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
NAACP  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
National Action Network  
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)  
National Association of Human Rights Workers  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Black Justice Coalition  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC)  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council on Independent Living  
National Education Association  
National Employment Law Project  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Fair Housing Alliance

National Health Law Program  
National Hispanic Media Coalition  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Legal Aid & Defender Association  
National Organization for Women  
National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Redistricting Foundation  
National Urban League  
National Women's Law Center  
Not In Our Town  
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates  
People For the American Way  
PFLAG National  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
POWER Interfaith  
Protect Our Care  
Public Advocacy for Kids  
Public Citizen  
Public Justice  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Sierra Club  
Sikh Coalition  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
SPLC Action Fund  
Supermajority  
The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)  
UnidosUS  
United State of Women  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
Voices for Progress  
Voto Latino  
YWCA USA

\*\* Signers updated as of May 12, 2021