

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Chair  
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

*Via Email to:*

[Phillip\\_Brest@judiciary-dem.senate.gov](mailto:Phillip_Brest@judiciary-dem.senate.gov);  
[Michael\\_Fragoso@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto:Michael_Fragoso@judiciary-rep.senate.gov)

May 20, 2021

**RE: The confirmation of Kenneth A. Polite for Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division at the United States Department of Justice**

Dear Senator Durbin and Senator Grassley,

We, the undersigned, represent a broad coalition of organizations dedicated to criminal justice reform, and promoting public health and safety in New Orleans, Louisiana. We write today to offer our enthusiastic support for the confirmation of Kenneth A. Polite to serve as Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division in the United States Department of Justice.

Amongst the co-signers of this letter are organizations that provide direct services to currently and formerly incarcerated people to help stop the cycle of incarceration that plagues our community; others advocate on a local, state, and national level to move our country away from dependence on incarceration, and implement new and effective solutions to truly keep our people safe.

We live, work, and raise our families in the most incarcerated city, in the most incarcerated state, in the most incarcerated country, in the world. Many of the undersigned organizations in this letter are led by people who have survived incarceration themselves, some were incarcerated due to prosecutorial misconduct and dishonesty by law enforcement, and many have lost loved ones to violence. We know personally that mass incarceration is a failed experiment. Instead of making our communities safer, it has helped maintain a cycle of poverty and violence.

During his term as United States Attorney for the Southeastern District of Louisiana Mr. Polite was committed to transparency and integrity. He dramatically reduced the use of unnecessary pre-trial detention, he prioritized the prosecution of public

corruption, civil rights violations by members of law enforcement, and violent crime. He also fostered community-based partnerships to address the root causes of violence in our community and prevent crime before it occurs, and, he worked with local reentry organizations and local employers to ensure that a mistake in someone's past does not define their entire future.

Mr. Polite grew up in New Orleans, in a neighborhood hit hardest by incarceration, crime, and violence. While Mr. Polite served as U.S. Attorney, he made it a point to support his community in ways you do not typically see a prosecutor prioritize their time.

Unlike many prosecutors, Mr. Polite made the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated people back into their families and communities a notable priority. Through the 30-2-2 initiative Mr. Polite brought dozens of employers into our state prison system, to meet people who were incarcerated. He set a goal to get at least 30 of those businesses to commit to hiring formerly incarcerated people in gainful, career track employment – he met, and exceeded, that goal. Just seeing a US Attorney visit a prison, something he did regularly during his term, was significant - and is too rarely done by prosecutors - but seeing a U.S. Attorney use his power and position to get businesses to voluntarily commit to changing their discriminatory hiring policies, and create pathways to success for formerly incarcerated people, was truly remarkable.

We support Mr. Polite's confirmation as Assistant Attorney General because we know that he will use the power and resources of the Department of Justice with integrity, accountability to our communities, and a commitment to moving our country beyond failed solutions that have not, and will not, keep our communities healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Voice of the Experienced (VOTE)  
The First 72+  
Power Coalition for Equity and Justice  
Orleans Parish Prison Reform Coalition (OPPRC)  
Promise of Justice Initiative  
Louisiana Parole Project  
Total Community Action  
Step Up Louisiana  
Louisiana Appleseed Center for Law and Justice  
The Juror Project  
Urban league of Louisiana  
Participatory Defense Movement Nola  
Operation Restoration

CC: 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

*Via Email To:*

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