

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

April 13, 2021

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

As graduates of Columbia University School of Law, we write to express our strong support for the confirmation of our fellow Columbia Law School alumnus (class of 2000), Kristen Clarke, as Assistant Attorney General for the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division.

Many of us knew Ms. Clarke when we were students at Columbia Law School. She distinguished herself academically, and as a peer. Kristen was named a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar (one of the highest academic honors awarded to students), was a member of the Human Rights Law Review, and served as Editor-in-Chief of the National Black Law Journal. Upon graduation, Kristen was awarded the Jane Marks Murphy Prize for excellence in advocacy as a clinical student. She took nearly every course offered in constitutional and civil rights law as well as courses designed to hone her advocacy skills.

Others of us did not overlap with Ms. Clarke at Columbia, but are proud to be associated with her as fellow graduates of the law school. We consider ourselves privileged to be in the company of many extremely distinguished members of the legal profession who are graduates of Columbia Law School, Kristen Clarke most notably. Since her graduation she has brought the highest honor and integrity to the practice of law and to the community of Columbia Law graduates. Ms. Clarke has charted a legal career that has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to serving the public interest and defending fundamental constitutional and civil rights. Upon graduation from law school, she was invited to serve in the prestigious Attorney General's Honors Program, working as a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, the very department she is now nominated to lead. From the Honors Program, she moved to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, litigating political participation and voting rights cases. From there she was appointed to serve as the Director of the Civil Rights Bureau of the New

York State Attorney General's Office, where she led initiatives on criminal justice issues and housing discrimination. Since 2015, Ms. Clarke has been the Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, one of the most distinguished civil rights organizations in the United States, founded in 1963 at the behest of President John F. Kennedy.

While maintaining this exceptional practice defending and advancing the civil rights of all Americans, Ms. Clarke also found the time to return to her alma mater, and co-taught "Civil Rights Lawyering in the Modern Era: Theory and Practice" at Columbia Law School. Columbia's Black Law Students Association honored Ms. Clarke with the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2010, and she was invited to deliver the keynote address at the 2015 Paul Robeson Gala. In July 2020, in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Clarke addressed Columbia Law students about how they can prepare themselves for a career in civil rights and social change.

We are proud to have Kristen Clarke as a fellow alumnus of Columbia Law School. In her professional life she has embodied the highest standards of integrity and a commitment to a vision of the fundamental rights secured in the constitution and laws of the United States as a sacred promise to all Americans. We can think of no better person to serve as the Assistant Attorney General for the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. We urge the Senate to undertake her speedy confirmation for this position.

Sincerely,

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