

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 12, 2021

Hon. Richard J. Durbin, Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin:

I am writing on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus to offer our very strong, unqualified, and enthusiastic support of the nomination for Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights of Kristen Clarke, the President and Executive Director of the National Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (Lawyers' Committee) and whose confirmation hearing, we understand, is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14, 2021. Ms. Clarke is uniquely qualified to lead this important division of the Department of Justice at this critical time in our nation's history, and when confirmed will become the first woman to lead the Civil Rights Division, which has played a life-changing role in securing the constitutionally guaranteed rights of all Americans, especially the marginalized and powerless, since it was created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which at the time was the first federal civil rights statute enacted by Congress in nearly a century.

Kristen Clarke is a career civil rights lawyer who has spent her entire professional life in public service building bridges and working to make equal justice under law a reality for all. Serving as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights will be a return to service for her since her distinguished legal career began as a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division when she joined the Department of Justice Honors Law Program after graduating from Columbia Law School. She has personally prosecuted crimes based on hatred and bigotry, human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault, and her work has touched virtually every area of civil rights, including voting rights, equal educational opportunity, fair housing and lending, equal employment, environmental justice, disability rights, LGBTQ rights, hate crimes and criminal justice.

Kristen Clarke continued her work advancing the cause of civil rights at the Legal Defense Fund, eventually becoming Co-Director of the Political Participation Group where she oversaw and coordinated the legal program in the areas of voting rights and election law. In 2009, as part of the LDF legal team, Kristen Clarke assisted in successfully defending the Voting Rights Act against a constitutional challenge in one of the most important civil rights cases to come before the U.S. Supreme Court up until

that time, *Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District No. One v. Holder*, 557 U.S. 193 (2009), which upheld the constitutionality of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and involved collaboration among a number of local and national organizations.

What is truly impressive about Kristen Clarke is the wide-spread and universal support she has garnered from the law enforcement community as she worked with these organizations to build trust between them and the communities they serve. She understands that the bedrock of democracy and of law and order is the diffuse support these communities have for the political system, regime, and authorities. That is why in 2019 she worked with the International Association of Chiefs of Police to develop strategies to enhance officers' response to hate crimes and hate incidents. These model policies have since been adopted by police forces across the globe. Paul Cell, the President of IACP said of their joint project: "I believe the IACP and Lawyers' Committee have provided unique expertise to establish an achievable action agenda that will help stakeholders respond effectively to these crimes, improve the well-being of targeted communities, and enhance the quality of overall community-police relations." In today's climate this experience is particularly relevant in fighting the rise in hate incidents targeted against the Asian American Pacific Islander and other communities.

Kristen Clarke's nomination is also strongly supported by the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement (NOBLE), the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE), the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA), and Vincent Talucci, Executive Director of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

The breadth and depth of Kristen Clark's experience can be seen in her accomplishments and achievements during other periods of her remarkable legal career. While serving as a federal prosecutor at the U.S. Department of Justice in the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division, she worked closely with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials to conduct investigations into issues such as human trafficking, hate crimes and official misconduct and she worked with law enforcement to investigate and prosecute domestic violence cases, including intimate partner violence, family violence, assaults, and stalking. As Chief of the Civil Rights Bureau in the New York State Attorney General's Office, Clarke worked with sheriffs' offices to institute best practices on language access to build trust and improve policing of communities with limited English proficiency. This collaborative work led to comprehensive language policies for forces across the state. And as the head of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, she conducted training for the National Sheriffs' Association on 21st Century Community Policing.

As President and CEO of the Lawyers' Committee, Ms. Clarke has led its efforts to protect and expand voting rights, promote fair housing and community development, fight for economic justice, promote equal educational opportunity, reform the criminal justice system, diversify the federal judiciary, and advocate for policies and programs to secure equal justice for all.

As has already been noted, Ms. Clarke served as Chief of the Civil Rights Bureau in the New York State Attorney General's Office, where she additionally led broad civil rights enforcement on matters including criminal justice issues, education and housing discrimination, fair lending, barriers to reentry, voting rights, immigrants' rights, gender inequality, disability rights, reproductive access and LGBT issues.

Ms. Clarke has a long and exceptional record of working well with Members of Congress from both political parties on issues relating to women's rights and empowerment, voting rights, and combating all forms of discrimination, including religious bigotry. She has testified before congressional committees frequently, offered constructive advice and thoughtful assistance on many of the major challenges facing the nation.

After the turbulence of the past four years at the Department of Justice, it is more important than ever that stability, responsibility, and above all, the commitment to equal justice for all be restored to the department and its reputation reestablished as the defender of the rule of law and of discrete and insular minorities vulnerable to unfair and unequal treatment. As Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Ms. Clarke will bring the same passion for justice that is the hallmark of her remarkable legal career to ensuring that all persons are treated equal under law and to combating discrimination, whether it be on the grounds of race, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. We are confident that Ms. Clarke is the ideal person at this time to lead the Civil Rights Division and we strongly support her nomination. We therefore urge the Judiciary Committee to report her nomination favorably and urge the full U.S. Senate to confirm her as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joyce Beatty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Congresswoman Joyce Beatty (OH-03), Chairwoman  
Congressional Black Caucus

cc: U.S. Senator Charles Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary

Members of U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary

