



STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
28 LIBERTY STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10005

LETTITIA JAMES
ATTORNEY GENERAL

(212) 416-8050

February 25, 2021

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

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

We, a diverse coalition of state attorneys general, charged with defending the rights of our states and their citizens and committed to protecting and upholding the rule of law, write today to strongly support the nominations of Merrick Garland, Lisa Monaco, Vanita Gupta, and Kristen Clarke to lead the United States Department of Justice (DOJ). This extraordinarily qualified slate of nominees—led by Merrick Garland—will help restore our justice systems, promote equity under the law, and defend the rights of all Americans.

As state attorneys general, each of us solemnly swore to discharge dual roles both as the chief counsel for the states we represent and the “people’s lawyer” for our constituents whose most basic rights have been violated. We sought office to protect the most vulnerable among us and to bring justice to those who would seek to harm and exploit them. We believe that—by supporting these superlative nominees—we are fulfilling those duties by advocating for Department of Justice leadership that shares these values and will support that fundamental work as partners.

In both experience and temperament, Judge Garland is well suited to lead the Department through these divisive times. If confirmed, Judge Garland will be among the most qualified Attorney Generals in our nation’s history. He has served in DOJ leadership positions under Presidents of both parties and distinguished himself as jurist as a United States Circuit Judge and then as the Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. In those roles, Judge Garland has developed a well-earned reputation for independence, fairness,

and the ability to build consensus. His nomination has garnered support from all across the political spectrum, including two Republican former-United States Attorneys General.

Just as importantly, Judge Garland's legal philosophy is precisely what is needed in this moment. Upon his nomination, Garland said, "the essence of the rule of law is that like cases are treated alike: That there not be one rule for Democrats and another for Republicans, one rule for friends, another for foes, one rule for the powerful, and another for the powerless." This country desperately needs a Department of Justice that respects the rule of law and believes every person equal in the eyes of justice. Under Merrick Garland's leadership, that is just what we will have.

President Biden's other DOJ nominees—Lisa Monaco, Vanita Gupta, and Kristen Clarke—are equally inspired and fitting choices for this critical inflection point in our nation's history. Lisa Monaco, nominee for Deputy Attorney General, is a highly respected national security professional, having served as one of President Obama's top counterterrorism advisers, held a wide range of senior Justice Department roles under three Presidents, and helped transform the FBI following 9/11. Her experience coordinating governmental management and response to homeland security crises—from terrorist attacks to pandemics—will be essential in to our national recovery from COVID-19.

Vanita Gupta, nominated as Associate Attorney General, has decades of experience improving our criminal justice system, an essential task for the new administration. From overturning wrongful convictions as line attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to spearheading the American Civil Liberties Union's National Campaign to End Mass Incarceration to revolutionizing the use of patterns and practices investigations to transform local police departments as head of DOJ Civil Rights, Gupta has been at the forefront of justice reform for her entire career.

Kirsten Clarke is one of the legal community's fiercest defenders of marginalized communities and most committed champions of equity under the law. Clarke has significant frontline experience from her time at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and in the DOJ Civil Rights Division and has demonstrated her leadership and coalition-building prowess as the president and executive director of the National Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. We are particularly excited about Clarke's background as the Chief of the Civil Rights Bureau of the New York State Attorney General's Office, where she secured landmark agreements with banks to address unlawful redlining and employers to address barriers to reentry for people with criminal backgrounds, among numerous other accomplishments.

As attorneys general, we know first-hand the qualities and qualifications necessary to defend both the sovereignty of the state and the rights of individuals. We applaud President Biden for nominating such a sterling slate of candidates to lead the Justice Department and are proud to give our unqualified endorsement to all four nominees.

Sincerely,



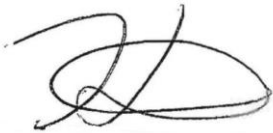
Letitia James
New York State Attorney General



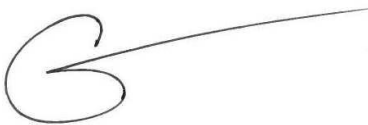
William Tong
Connecticut Attorney General



Kathleen Jennings
Delaware Attorney General



Karl Racine
District of Columbia Attorney General



Clare E. Connors
Hawaii Attorney General



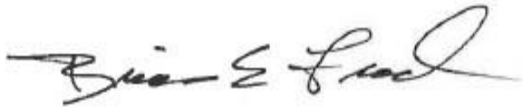
Kwame Raoul
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Massachusetts Attorney General



Aaron Ford
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Ellen F. Rosenblum
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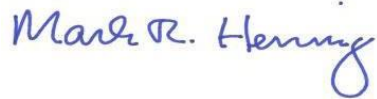
Josh Shapiro
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Attorney General



Peter Neronha
Rhode Island Attorney General

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Thomas J. Donovan, Jr.
Vermont Attorney General

Handwritten signature of Mark R. Herring in blue ink, with a cursive style.

Mark R. Herring
Virginia Attorney General

Handwritten signature of Bob Ferguson in blue ink, with a cursive style.

Bob Ferguson
Washington State Attorney General