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February 23, 2021

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

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Committee Members:

On behalf of Futures Without Violence, I write to offer my strong support for Vanita Gupta for the position of Associate Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Futures Without Violence (FUTURES) is a national public health and social justice organization that for over 35 years has worked to prevent violence against women and children, and improve individual, systemic, and community responses to those impacted by violence and abuse. In addition to our groundbreaking programs and campaigns, we have provided training and technical assistance to myriad professionals who touch the lives of those impacted by domestic and sexual violence, and co-founded the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence, which for over 21 years has trained thousands of judges and court personnel to enhance their understanding of domestic violence in their courts and communities.

FUTURES has been fortunate to have worked closely with Ms. Gupta in her role as President and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (LCCHR). While FUTURES has always participated in various coalitions and task forces organized by LCCHR, under Ms. Gupta's leadership, LCCHR made a concerted effort to include organizations such as ours across numerous task forces in order to inform and advance policy goals, taking a more intentional intersectional approach to policy and advocacy efforts. Such an approach will be critical in the coming months and beyond, as the Administration works to build back our nation's economy and answer the call for racial justice and criminal justice reform. Ms. Gupta has a keen understanding that without gender justice, there can be no racial justice, or any economic justice or stability for women and their families.

Such an intersectional and multi-stakeholder lens has been a hallmark of Ms. Gupta's career. While she was Deputy Legal Director at the American Civil Liberties Union, where she oversaw the ACLU's criminal justice reform work, she garnered praise for bringing together advocates, law enforcement, and entities like the American Legislative Exchange Council, finding common ground across ideological and political divides and interests. Ms. Gupta continued this consensus building approach when she joined the Department of Justice (DOJ) to lead the Civil Rights Division (CRT).

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During her tenure at CRT, the Division intentionally expanded its pattern and practice litigation against law enforcement to include civil rights enforcement specifically on behalf of survivors of sexual violence, most notably demonstrated by consent decrees entered into with the Missoula, MT and Baltimore, MD police departments. The findings coming out of the Baltimore case revealed a police department that was dismissive of Black victims, sexual assault survivors, sex workers, and transgender individuals. As a direct result of these cases and her leadership at DOJ writ large, stakeholders and DOJ came together to draft the guidance [Identifying and Addressing Gender Bias in Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence](#), which provided recommendations, informed by advocates and experts, including FUTURES, for improving law enforcement responses to gender-based violence. Grants were also provided through the Office on Violence Against Women and Office for Victims of Crime to assist law enforcement agencies with implementation of these recommendations. FUTURES was fortunate to have partnered with the International Association of Chiefs of Police on one of these grants providing training and technical assistance on enhancing community trust and developing a survivor-centered response for police departments in FL, MA, WY, MN, PA, and TX.

The position of Associate Attorney General (AAG) oversees DOJ divisions that are of utmost importance to survivors as well as organizations and advocates that work to improve individual, systemic, institutional, and community responses to violence and abuse, and promote prevention, such as ours. The Office on Violence Against Women, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention are critical partners in our efforts to build a collective future free from violence and abuse. Survivors who are Black, Indigenous, immigrant, LGBTQ, or who are otherwise marginalized, are vulnerable to the continuing impacts of violence and least likely to be able to access justice. Our nation needs an AAG who will ensure efforts across DOJ center the most vulnerable, and promote equal access to justice for all. Indeed, Ms. Gupta's life's work has been to protect the vulnerable and vindicate the rights of all people.

Given her strong record of fighting for the safety and rights for all people and her ability to collaborate with differing perspectives, we encourage you to forward her nomination for AAG to the full Senate.

If we can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to our General Counsel, Linda Seabrook, who worked with Ms. Gupta at DOJ, at 202-595-7384.

With respect,



Esta Soler, President & Founder

cc: Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell

