

April 14, 2021

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 Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

We write in support of Kristen M. Clarke's nomination as Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice.

There are few people better suited to this critical role — particularly at such a critical moment — than Ms. Clarke. We know, because we've seen her work up close.

As former and current officials in the Office of the New York State Attorney General, where Ms. Clarke led the Civil Rights Bureau, we know her intellect, her tenacity, and her values firsthand. Many of us worked closely with her day in and day out for years, on high-pressure cases and other stressful situations that allowed us to truly know and understand who she is and what drives her.

We have no doubt that Ms. Clarke is motivated by a deep and abiding commitment to equal justice under the law and the belief that all Americans are entitled to fundamental dignity. And at a moment when civil rights are under attack, her experience and leadership are precisely what we need at DOJ.

While serving as the Civil Rights Bureau Chief in the New York Attorney General's office, Ms. Clarke won justice for New Yorkers from all walks of life, across many areas of the law.

She secured a multi-million dollar settlement with ConEd following an investigation into gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment complaints involving over 300 women employees at the utility company.

She was central to launching the Religious Rights Initiative, targeting faith-based discrimination and violations of New Yorkers' freedom of religion.

She established a statewide voter rights hotline and helped craft a voting rights bill that drove the conversation on election reform in New York State — culminating in many of the reforms that recently became law.

She took on discrimination in our financial system — expanding access to mainstream banking services for unbanked and underbanked communities nationwide, through agreements with four major banks to address the use of tools that prevented many customers from opening basic checking accounts. The agreements Ms. Clarke led with Capital One, Citibank, Santander, and Chase help steer low-income Americans away from reliance on payday loans and other predatory lending options of last resort.

She reached landmark agreements to stop unlawful redlining, preventing banks from refusing to make mortgages available in predominantly Black neighborhoods.

She launched a crucial investigation into tenant harassment that ultimately led to the largest-ever monetary settlement with an individual landlord and additional unprecedented restitution.

The list goes on and on. There isn't enough space here to recount everything else Ms. Clarke has done to protect New Yorkers' civil rights — from defending the rights of immigrants, LGBTQ New Yorkers, and people with disabilities, to tackling racial profiling of consumers and race-based discrimination in our school system.

Ms. Clarke went on to lead the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, taking on violent extremism, fighting for fair housing and education, and so much more. Some of us were fortunate enough to also partner with her during her time at the Lawyers' Committee and see her in action yet again.

Ms. Clarke's decades-long record of justice speaks for itself. What might not be as evident is the incomparable legacy she left at the NY Attorney General's office — and the deep admiration and respect she's garnered among her former colleagues.

There is no question: Kristen Clarke is exactly who we need leading the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.

As Senators consider Ms. Clarke's nomination, please know that those who've worked directly with her — and have seen her leadership up close — are among her most enthusiastic supporters. The Department of Justice, and our country, would be a better place with Kristen Clarke leading the charge on civil rights. We hope that the Senate will quickly confirm her nomination.

Sincerely,

Jessica Attie
Jane Azia
Michael Barbosa
Dana Biberman
Trisha Botty
Alvin Bragg
Simon Brandler
Erica Buckley
Brant Campbell

Thomas Teige Carroll
Aaron Chase
Anushua Choudhury
Jason Clark
Jessica Clarke
Adam Cohen
Doug Cohen
Stephanie Cooper (Sheehan)
Daniel Cort
Desiree Cummings
Justin Deabler
Lisa Dell
Jesse Devine
Leslie Dubeck
Conor Duffy
Peggy Farber
Najah Farley
Donya Fernandez
John Ferrara
Randall Fox
Andrew Friedman
Yael Fuchs
Terri Gerstein
Melvin Goldberg
Jerry Goldfeder
Melissa Grace
Kenya Handy-Hilliard
Monique Harding
Christina Harvey
Thomas James Hatter
Claudia Henriquez
Benjamin Holt
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Jennifer Simcovitch
Arlene Smoler
Eric Soufer
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