



February 22, 2021

United States Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

Ujima, Inc. is a national Culturally Specific Services Issue Resource Center funded by the Administration of Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by and through the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act. The name Ujima was derived from one of the Kwanzaa principles which means Collective Work and Responsibility. This principle is critical to addressing violence against Black women in the United States. Ujima Inc. through its education and outreach; training and technical assistance; resource development; research; and public policy efforts mobilizes the Black community and allies to strengthen our families, recognizing that the safety and viability of our families is connected to the health and well-being of our individual neighborhoods and communities at large. We are part of a network of domestic violence programs that works collaboratively to promote practices and strategies to improve our nation's response to domestic violence, sexual assault, and community violence.

Survivors of domestic violence seek help from a multitude of systems for safety and healing, however those same systems can cause harm and are often difficult to navigate. Organizations that serve Black survivors have historically been underfunded and unable to provide the holistic services necessary to satisfy the needs of victims while identifying a practical safety plan. Black women are almost 3x as likely to be killed by an intimate partner than white women – we are particularly concerned that this statistic will increase as we grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic and the dearth of resources. We were encouraged by Kristen Clarke's nomination for Assistant Attorney General for the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. Attorney Clarke astutely acknowledged racial disparities related to the pandemic early on, as she stated at the top of 2020, she was “deeply concerned that African American communities are being hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, and that racial bias may be impacting the access they receive to testing and healthcare.” Additionally, she has testified before Congress on barriers to voting rights; she has led civil rights enforcement of education and housing discrimination; and has prosecuted human trafficking and hate crime cases. Her commitment to equal justice under the law is exemplary. Ujima, Inc. fully supports the confirmation of Attorney Kristen Clarke as Assistant Attorney General for the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division.

Respectfully,

Karma Cottman
Executive Director