



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 work collaboratively to promote practices and strategies to improve our nation's response to domestic violence, sexual assault, and community violence.

Culturally specific providers offer safety and sustainability for survivors that have endured the trauma of abuse. 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 cope with the COVID-19 pandemic and the dearth of resources. Attorney Gupta has a demonstrated history of working to ensure equity for survivors via survivor-centered and trauma informed responses. Through her work with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Educational Fund she is familiar with the Black communities' continued struggle for adequate resources. She has navigated cumbersome conversations and developed salient strategies to work toward actionable solutions to systemic inequities and the impact on communities of color.

In May of 2019 as the President & CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Attorney Gupta called for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act stating “Everyone deserves to live safe and healthy lives, free from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking.” Since the commencement of her legal career Attorney Gupta has advocated for the Black community and other marginalized groups to protect and proliferate civil rights, justice, and solidify results for a more impartial judicial system. Her commitment to social change and advocacy to dismantle barriers to access and fairness is unwavering and resolute. We fully support the confirmation of Attorney Vanita Gupta as the Associate Attorney General for the United States Department of Justice.

Respectfully,

Karma Cottman
Executive Director