

March 8, 2021

Dear Senator:

On behalf of YWCA USA, a network of over 200 local associations in 45 states and the District of Columbia, I write today to express our **support for the confirmation of Vanita Gupta to serve as the next Associate Attorney General and urge you to vote yes when this vote comes to the Senate floor.**

As one of the oldest and largest women's organizations in the nation, YWCA USA is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. We have been at the forefront of the most pressing social movements for more than 160 years—from voting rights to civil rights, from affordable housing to pay equity, from violence prevention to health care reform. Today, YWCA serves over 2 million women, girls and family members of all ages and backgrounds each year in more than 1,200 communities across the U.S.

The Associate Attorney General has direct responsibilities in advising the Attorney General on a broad range of civil rights, racial justice, and gender equity laws and policies that are central to YWCA's programmatic and policy efforts. YWCA is the largest network of domestic and sexual violence service providers in the U.S., with more than 150 YWCAs across 44 states providing gender-based violence services—including safe and secure housing, crisis hotlines, counseling, court assistance, family justice centers, and other community and safety programs—to more than 535,000 women, children and families annually. YWCAs also provide racial justice and civil rights programming to more than 150,000 women, children, and families each year. Moreover, we are outspoken advocates at the federal level on a broad range of gender-based violence, justice system, and civil rights issues under the purview of the Department of Justice, particularly those that impact equity, rights, and racial justice for women and girls of color.

Informed by our long history of supporting survivors of domestic and sexual violence, advocating for policies to eliminate the criminalization of women and girls of color, and protecting the safety and voting rights of marginalized communities, we believe that Ms. Gupta has the practical experience, integrity, and commitment to pressing civil and human rights issues to effectively advise and support the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General in leading the Department of Justice (DOJ), enforcing our nation's laws, setting justice policy, and administering programs.

We note in particular Ms. Gupta's extensive professional background and legal expertise in preparing her to undertake this role. Having previously served as the principal deputy assistant attorney general and head of DOJ's Civil Rights Division, Ms. Gupta knows the culture, systems, and structure of the Department, providing her with critical insights for executing the

responsibilities of the Associate Attorney General. Ms. Gupta's years leading DOJ's Civil Rights Division, litigating cases and advancing policy for the ACLU and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and leading the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights provide deep knowledge, tested skills, and subject matter expertise across the broad range of civil and criminal legal and policy issues she will be called on to address. Moreover, Ms. Gupta has focused throughout her career on civil rights and racial justice issues that directly impact communities of color, women and girls, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other historically marginalized groups. **Combined, Ms. Gupta's past professional experiences provide her with the legal acumen and day-one readiness to address significant policing, white nationalism, domestic terrorism, voting rights, and criminal justice challenges facing our nation.**

In fulfilling its duty to provide advice and consent on presidential nominations, YWCA encourages the Senate to ensure that nominees have professional expertise in the areas for which they are nominated, a deep familiarity with the breadth of programs overseen by the agency they are nominated to lead, and a strong commitment to the agency's mission. YWCA believes that Ms. Gupta meets this standard and that she has the experience, knowledge, and commitment to serve as the Associate Attorney General.

In addition, YWCA USA notes that Ms. Gupta would be the first woman of color to hold the position of Associate Attorney General. Ensuring that all facets of government leadership reflect the rich diversity of our nation is a fundamental tenet of YWCA's advocacy to advance our mission to eliminate racism and empower women, and Ms. Gupta's confirmation would advance this key goal. **Accordingly, we urge you to confirm Ms. Gupta's nomination as Associate Attorney General.**

Upon confirmation, we look forward to working with Ms. Gupta and the leadership of the Department to strengthen and sustain the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) and the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), particularly as our nation endures and recovers from the COVID-19 crisis. The onset and prolonged duration of the COVID-19 pandemic have created a shadow pandemic of violence against women and girls, resulting in increased requests for services and assistance. OVW and OVC oversee federal funding authorized through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) that provide critical on-the-ground resources to protect and support survivors of gender-based violence. According to OVW, 53 YWCAs in 27 states have received \$38 million in funding through OVW to support services for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence since 2015, and 51 YWCAs across 28 states have received more than \$80 million in funding through OVC. YWCAs effectively use this funding—together with local, state, and private funding from local foundations, private donations, and state agencies—to prevent and respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. **Given YWCA's expertise as the nation's largest network of domestic and sexual violence service providers, YWCA has confidence in Ms. Gupta's ability to ensure that survivors of gender-based violence, particularly survivors of color and those from other marginalized communities, are protected and looks forward to working with her to ensure that their needs are met.**

Thank you in advance for your support and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact Pam Yuen, YWCA USA Director of Government Relations, at pyuen@ywca.org or 202-559-7022 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine V. Beane". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Catherine V. Beane

Vice President, Public Policy & Advocacy