



March 8, 2021

Hon. Richard J. Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
711 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee
135 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for Nomination of Vanita Gupta

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

The undersigned disability and aging rights organizations strongly support the nomination of Vanita Gupta to serve as the Associate Attorney General of the United States in the U.S. Department of Justice. CCD is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

Vanita Gupta is a strong leader and a stellar choice for Associate Attorney General. The disability community has worked with Ms. Gupta for years, during her tenure as Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights and as President and CEO of the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights. She has demonstrated thoughtful and measured leadership to protect the rights of, and enforce the law on behalf of, all Americans, including Americans with disabilities.

Among the key responsibilities of the Associate Attorney General is oversight of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. As a longstanding champion of civil rights, Ms. Gupta has shown a steadfast commitment to enforcing the rights of individuals with disabilities. During her tenure at the Justice Department, she led highly effective civil rights enforcement efforts that

resulted in systemic settlement agreements resolving a wide variety of critical disability rights issues including needless institutionalization, health care discrimination, segregated and unequal education, inaccessible public transportation, inaccessible voting systems, inappropriate pre-employment medical inquiries, inaccessible websites for public services, failure to provide accommodations in high stakes testing, segregated employment services, discrimination in parental rights and child welfare systems, failure to accommodate children with disabilities in child care centers, and discriminatory policing practices, among other issues.

These efforts brought critical improvements in the lives of thousands of people with disabilities. As Ms. Gupta observed, “[W]hen I entered the Justice Department, I knew that disability rights were core civil and human rights, and that every issue in every community we care about—from health care to employment to police violence to voting rights—impacts the disability community... my team there at the Justice Department... really worked tirelessly to close the gaps so that people disabilities can live, work, and learn with dignity in their own communities and in our communities.”¹ As President and CEO of the Leadership Conference, Ms. Gupta worked repeatedly with the disability community to preserve and strengthen protections for individuals with disabilities.

The national conversation sparked by the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and far too many other Black Americans, including many disabled Americans, at the hands of law enforcement has created an urgency for the Justice Department to take action to address the widespread concern about discriminatory policing practices. The important work that Ms. Gupta has done in this area makes her a perfect candidate to help lead the Justice Department at this key moment in time.

Ms. Gupta has the skill and temperament to lead Justice Department enforcement efforts with respect not only to civil rights but to all areas of the Associate Attorney General’s responsibility. She is a highly effective negotiator and leader who is skilled at bringing together individuals with different viewpoints to build consensus while ensuring full and fair enforcement of the law.

We urge you to confirm Vanita Gupta as Associate Attorney General. She is the right person for this position and will serve the Department with extraordinary skill.

¹ <https://civilrights.org/blog/celebrating-30-years-of-the-americans-with-disabilities-act/>

Sincerely,

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Foundation for the Blind

Association of People Supporting Employment First: APSE

Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation

CommunicationFIRST

Disability Rights Advocates

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

Justice in Aging

Little Lobbyists

National Association of the Deaf

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery

National Council on Independent Living

National Disability Rights Network

National Federation of the Blind

Not Dead Yet

Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies

TASH

TDI

United Spinal Association