



PRESIDENT
NAN ARON

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

April 13, 2021

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Durbin:

On behalf of the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing over 120 public interest and civil rights organizations, I write to strongly support the confirmation of Kristen Clarke to serve as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

Our nation today is faced with some of the most virulent attacks on our fundamental civil rights in generations. Over the past four years, we have seen a rise in violence and hate crimes motivated by racial and religious intolerance; egregious state-led attacks on voting rights; and a seemingly unceasing wave of police misconduct resulting in countless deaths. In this moment, the DOJ and the nation need a leader with a strong and demonstrated commitment to equal justice for all at the helm of the Civil Rights Division. In nominating Kristen Clarke, President Biden has found that leader.

Ms. Clarke has dedicated her entire career to safeguarding the civil rights of the most vulnerable members of our society. As the head of the Civil Rights Bureau for the New York State Attorney General's Office, she established the Religious Rights Unit to fight religious intolerance and enforced civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, sex, disability, and other protected traits. Additionally, under her guidance as President and Executive Director, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law established the James Byrd, Jr. Center to Stop Hate and which has led efforts opposing neo-Nazis, the Proud Boys, and other white supremacist groups responsible for rising racially motivated violence. And during her earlier service at the DOJ Civil Rights Division, Ms. Clarke worked in the Criminal Section, where she not only prosecuted cases of police misconduct and brutality, but also human trafficking and hate crimes.

Ms. Clarke has also worked for years to guarantee the right to vote in the face of partisan suppression

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and redistricting efforts, currently through the Lawyers' Committee's Election Protection coalition, and previously in the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section and at the Voting Rights Project at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. Notably, while later overturned by the Supreme Court, at LDF Ms. Clarke won an early victory in *Shelby County v. Holder*, presciently arguing that without the guardrails created by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, many states would revert to discriminating against voters on the basis of race.

Kristen Clarke's hands-on experience advocating for our most vulnerable and protecting this wide range of civil rights makes her uniquely qualified to serve as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. And her life experience as the first-generation daughter of Jamaican immigrants who came to America seeking better opportunities for their children gives her an invaluable insight into the promise of the American Dream and its reliance on DOJ leadership dedicated to equal justice for all. Her commitment to the fight for fair courts and judges with a demonstrated commitment to equal justice and the proper application of constitutional rights and legal protections is made more apparent by her leadership at the Lawyers' Committee where the Judicial Diversity Initiative fights to increase representation of jurists from diverse backgrounds on the federal bench.

AFJ is confident that Kristen Clarke has not only the breadth of professional experience required of the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, but also a deep passion for justice and equity that will drive the Division to meet the challenges our nation faces in this moment.

The Senate should expeditiously confirm Ms. Clarke as assistant attorney general.

Sincerely,



Nan Aron
President