

April 7, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Kristen Clarke as Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We, the members of the Board of Directors and Honorary Lifetime Trustees of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and leaders of the legal profession, write in strong support of the nomination of Kristen Clarke for the position of Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice. Our Board includes representatives from more than 150 major law firms, Fortune 500 corporations, as well as academic institutions, each of whom shares a commitment to securing equal justice for all through the rule of law.

Since its creation in 1963, at the request of President John F. Kennedy, the Lawyers' Committee has been a leader in the struggle for safeguarding civil rights. Current events remind us now, more than ever, of the critical need for experienced, committed and principled leadership at the Department of Justice generally, and at the Civil Rights Division in particular.

As President and Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for the past five years, Ms. Clarke has worked tirelessly to lead the organization's groundbreaking and impactful efforts to protect civil rights for all. She has done so with an unwavering ethical compass while representing the highest ideals of the legal profession. In all of her engagements with our Board, staff, clients and partners, she has conveyed a deep and abiding respect for all people across the spectrum of race, ethnicity, faith and sexual identity.

Ms. Clarke is the embodiment of the American ideal: She grew up in Brooklyn, New York, the daughter of immigrants. Through hard work and discipline, she graduated from Choate Rosemary Hall, Harvard College and Columbia Law School.

After law school, Ms. Clarke began her career at the very office she has now been tapped to lead, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. While working as a trial attorney in the Voting Section and as a federal prosecutor in the Criminal Section, she handled cases involving voting rights, hate crimes, and human trafficking. After continuing her fight for justice at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and as Chief of the Civil Rights Bureau for the New York State Attorney General's Office, in 2016 Ms. Clarke accepted the invitation to lead the Lawyers' Committee.

Throughout the last five years, during a time of heightened awareness and challenge for the civil rights agenda, the Lawyers' Committee has been at the forefront of every major effort to uphold the rule of law, to confront systemic racism, to protect the underprivileged, and to fight for the fair administration of justice. The impact our organization has had during this time is a testament to Ms. Clarke's leadership. During her tenure, the organization's docket expanded significantly, including filing more than 250 cases over a 5-year span. Virtually all of the Lawyers' Committee's cases have been carried out in partnership and collaboration with Board members, their law firms and other members of the private bar.

Canon 2 of the American Bar Association's Code of Professional Responsibility calls for "every lawyer, regardless of professional prominence or professional work load, to find some time to participate in serving the disadvantaged." Ms. Clarke works every day to promote this principle by partnering with the private bar to ensure that law firms and corporations across the country devote significant time and resources to serving the disadvantaged and to promoting equal justice under law. One example of this is Election Protection, the nation's largest non-partisan voter protection program, which is led by the Lawyers' Committee and supported by Board members. More than 42,000 lawyers across the country supported this extraordinary, non-partisan program under Ms. Clarke's watch in 2020.

We know Ms. Clarke well, we have worked with her and seen her in action, and we know that she has fought throughout her career to achieve the goals of equity and justice for all. Kristen Clarke is the perfect choice to lead the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice as it confronts the inequities faced by so many Americans during this difficult time. She has our complete confidence and support, and we urge her swift confirmation.

With Regards,

Officers

Shira Scheindlin, Co-Chair

Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP¹

New York

¹ Please note, the signatories listed below have joined solely in their personal capacity. The firms, organizations, and universities listed are provided for identification purposes of the signatory only.

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