



ASIAN AMERICANS
**ADVANCING
JUSTICE**
AAJC

April 8, 2021

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chair Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC, I write to express our strong support for the confirmation of Kristen Clarke to serve as the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC (Advancing Justice | AAJC) is a national non-profit, non-partisan organization that works through policy advocacy, community education, and litigation to advance the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and to build and promote a fair and equitable society for all. Founded in 1991, Advancing Justice | AAJC is one of the nation's leading experts on civil rights issues of importance to the Asian American community.

In the wake of the January 6th white supremacist insurrection at the Capitol, Asian Americans and other communities of color are still left to grapple with a justice system that has yet to achieve full equity and protection of immigrants and communities of color. In this moment, our country is seeing heinous acts of violence against Asian Americans, a trend that may outlast the virus for which its victims have been wrongfully scapegoated. We see this in the unrelenting efforts to disenfranchise our communities from the ballot box, the Census, and redistricting. And we see it in the disparities in access to lifesaving health services during a historic public health crisis.

The daughter of Jamaican immigrants, Ms. Clarke is someone who, like the majority of Asian Americans in this country, comes from an immigrant family. She has a deep understanding of how justice has been, and often still is, unequally applied towards communities of color, and that the stewardship and protection of an individual's civil and human rights—regardless of race, sex, color, gender identity, and immigration status—require exceptional and compassionate leadership.

Ms. Clarke has demonstrated such leadership time and time again, leading an extraordinary career combating structural racism and inequality in the justice system with courage and discernment. She began her career in the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, helped lead litigation on voting rights at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and later was appointed to head the Civil Rights Bureau of the New York State Attorney General's Office.

Most recently, Ms. Clarke served as president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, one of our nation's premier national civil rights organizations. We have had the pleasure of working closely with Ms. Clarke and the Lawyers' Committee under her leadership, partnering in the national Election Protection efforts – sharing the infrastructure that supports voter protection hotlines in numerous languages, including Advancing Justice | AAJC's Asian languages hotline. We also collaborated as litigating organizations, each filing successful legal challenges against the prior administration's attempt to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census. Furthermore, under her leadership, the Lawyers' Committee launched the Stop Hate Project, and partnered with Advancing Justice | AAJC in our efforts to fight anti-Asian hate.

Ms. Clarke's confirmation would be historic for the Justice Department, and for our country: she would be the first woman confirmed to lead the Civil Rights Division and the first Black woman to hold the post in any capacity. It is for all of these reasons that we urge the Senate to confirm Kristen Clarke as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights without delay.

Sincerely,



John C. Yang
President & Executive Director
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Cc: Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary

