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Senator Coons, Civil Rights, Law Enforcement, and Conservative Leaders United in Support of Vanita Gupta for Justice Department

WASHINGTON – Senator Chris Coons (D-Del.), leading civil rights and law enforcement organizations, and conservative leaders hosted a press call today urging the Senate to confirm Vanita Gupta as the next associate attorney general at the U.S. Department of Justice. The Senate is scheduled to hold a hearing on her nomination on March 9.

To view a video recording of the call, click [here](#).

The following statements were made:

Senator Chris Coons (D-Del.), member, Senate Judiciary Committee: “From serving as the president of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights to leading the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice, Vanita Gupta has demonstrated a strong commitment to fighting for justice, equality, and accountability under the law throughout her career. Vanita has brought together advocates from across the political spectrum in her work to address some of our country’s most difficult and pressing challenges, and I’m grateful to the law enforcement, civil rights, and conservative leaders who joined this call to show their support of her nomination. I’m committed to working with my colleagues to swiftly confirm Vanita Gupta to serve as associate attorney general.”

Wade Henderson, interim president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights: “Being the proven consensus builder that she is, I have had the pleasure to get to know Vanita quite well during my career. While her nomination is historic, I can assure you all that she is a fierce champion for equal justice who will bring independence and integrity back to the department. Vanita is an innovative mind that listens to diverse perspectives and centers those who are most impacted by the decisions. Our coalition could not be more pleased that President Biden has tapped Vanita for this critical leadership position to help restore confidence in the Justice Department and criminal-legal system.”

Sherrilyn Ifill, president and director-counsel, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.: “I have known Vanita Gupta for 15 years. During that time, I have known her to be a lawyer and leader of unimpeachable integrity, strategic vision, and unwavering commitment to principles of equality and justice. Her historic nomination as the first woman of color and first civil rights lawyer to be selected for the role of associate attorney general, is surpassed only by her lengthy track record as one of the nation’s most visionary civil rights lawyers. Her approach to a range of issues from voting rights to police accountability are necessary ingredients for restoring the public’s faith in the Department of Justice. With Ms. Gupta as associate AG, we are hopeful that the department will soon return to its long-held commitment to enforce civil rights

protections and ensure justice for all. We call on the Senate to confirm Ms. Gupta expeditiously.”

Mark Holden, former general counsel and senior vice president of Koch Industries: “Vanita Gupta’s approach to reform and justice is similar to what I have advocated for, including a system focused on equal rights, equal justice, community safety, redemption, rehabilitation, and restoration. I have the utmost respect for her and her commitment to making our system fair and just for everyone. She will honor and respect the duty trusted to her should she be confirmed as the associate attorney general.”

Chris Magnus, chief of police, Tucson Police Department: “Vanita is one of the smartest people I know, yet she has a sense of humor and is very down to earth — a quality that cops like and appreciate. She’s not just another Washington bureaucrat. She works hard because she seems to really care about community-engaged policing and improving the policing profession. She treats everyone — including the police — with respect and she brings everyone to the table. The Senate should confirm her to this important post.”

Janet Murguia, president and CEO UnidosUS: “I am honored to express UnidosUS’ strong and unequivocal support of Vanita Gupta. She will bring her wealth of expertise, experience, and talent to the Justice Department at a time when our country sorely needs it. I have witnessed her credibility and integrity firsthand in our joint efforts to ensure voting rights for all Americans, greater diversity in our institutions, and combating hate and bigotry on social media and the internet. She deserves a swift Senate confirmation so she can get to work on behalf of all of us.”

Marc Levin, former director, Right on Crime: “Vanita may come from a different side of the political spectrum, but I’ve always found her interested in identifying areas where we can work together. I deeply respect the strength of her intellect and her longtime commitment to work to find common ground on solutions supported by evidence to deliver safety and justice for all. She is exactly the kind of public servant that would thrive as associate attorney general, and the Senate should confirm her.”

David Mahoney, Dane County, WI sheriff and president, National Sheriffs’ Association: “I look forward to the confirmation of Ms. Vanita Gupta in the position of associate attorney general of the United States Department of Justice. I have worked with Ms. Gupta in my position as sheriff in the past and know her to be no stranger to law enforcement issues, she believes in the truth and like I believes that our nation's law enforcement officers and leaders must be partners in embracing reforms within our profession and in doing so build a healthy relationship with the Department of Justice.”

Fatima Goss Graves, president and CEO, National Women’s Law Center: “Vanita Gupta will be ready on day one to restore the missions and vitality of the Department of Justice and take on our country’s most pressing legal challenges. She understands how our country’s laws are lived, and the effects they have on the most disenfranchised and marginalized individuals and communities. It is time for us to unite behind people like Vanita who represent the best of us, working on behalf of a more just and equitable future for all of us. We give our full support and urge the Senate to confirm her quickly.”

Art Acevedo, chief of police, Houston Police Department and president, Major Cities Chiefs Association: “Law enforcement leadership and the rank and file don’t always agree — but we agree that Vanita Gupta is eminently qualified to serve as associate attorney general. She has worked with law enforcement and policing reform advocates as a thoughtful partner, to help achieve real reform. We have worked with her before, and look forward to working with her in her new role.”

Sarah Longwell, executive director, Defending Democracy Together: “Vanita Gupta is a consensus builder who rightly has deep cross-partisan support. Through her work as a tremendous ally in the fight for criminal justice reform, she has earned the respect of many conservatives. That is why we, along with so many other law enforcement and conservative leaders, strongly support her nomination to be the next associate attorney general. We encourage senators from both sides of the aisle to support her confirmation.”

Derrick Johnson, president and CEO, NAACP: “The confirmation of Vanita Gupta is a pivotal moment for civil rights. Today, our Department of Justice must lead the country forward. How our nation heals and repairs the damage from the last four years will determine the direction of our democracy. In the top positions, we need the best the civil rights community has to offer. We have it in Vanita Gupta, one of the NAACP’s enduring friends and closest allies. DOJ’s essential mission is to do justice. No one understands that better than Vanita.”

RESOURCES:

- The Leadership Conference and more than 100 organizations' [letter of support](#) for the confirmation of Vanita Gupta.
A range of organizations have also submitted letters in support of Gupta. Those letters are available [here](#).

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights is a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 220 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States. The Leadership Conference works toward an America as good as its ideals. For more information on The Leadership Conference and its member organizations, visit www.civilrights.org.

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