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LDF Issues Statement on United States Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta's Planned Departure from the Department of Justice

Today, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced the planned February departure of United States Associate Attorney General (AAG) Vanita Gupta. AAG Gupta is the 19th United States Associate Attorney General — the third-ranking official at DOJ — and is the third longest-serving person in that position. She has also led the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights and worked as a litigator at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF).

LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson and Associate Director-Counsel Tona Boyd, issued the following statements regarding AAG Gupta's departure from the DOJ.

Nelson:

“Vanita Gupta, who is an LDF alum, has served this country with distinction as Associate Attorney General. Her confirmation to the Justice Department was historic — AAG Gupta was the first woman of color to serve in her position, as well as the first civil rights lawyer to be in one of the top three roles at the DOJ. Building on her extensive background of civil rights advocacy and enforcement throughout her career, AAG Gupta has continued to be an intrepid fighter for civil rights during her tenure at the DOJ. We thank her for her exceptional service and steadfast commitment to advancing justice throughout her career. AAG Gupta has left an indelible mark on the legal landscape of this country through her work at DOJ.

“Our nation will be well served by building on the precedent of having an accomplished and seasoned civil rights attorney in the critical role of Associate Attorney General. The DOJ was founded to address a deluge of post-Civil War litigation and continues to play a vital role in protecting the rule of law, as we face unprecedented legal challenges and uncertainties threatening our most basic civil rights. The Department needs more lawyers who have experience advancing equal justice under the law. We urge President Biden to answer the call.”

Boyd:

“I was honored to serve under then Acting Assistant Attorney General Gupta when she led the civil rights division at the beginning of my legal career. The connection between the work of exceptional civil rights attorneys like AAG Vanita Gupta and the health of our democracy cannot be overstated. AAG Gupta’s work included hate crime prosecutions, policing reform, criminal justice reform, protecting reproductive rights and disability rights, and has undoubtedly impacted countless lives. Her contributions demonstrate the ways that the law can be used to create a more equitable and inclusive society. Her approach to the work proves that we can move the needle for civil rights even in divisive times.”

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Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.