

March 22, 2021

Sent Via Electronic Mail

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Kaleb_Froehlich@murkowski.senate.gov

U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Larry_Burton@sullivan.senate.gov

Dear Senators Murkowski and Sullivan,

We write this letter in enthusiastic and unqualified support of Vanita Gupta, the President's nominee to serve as Associate Attorney General. We likewise urge you to support Ms. Gupta's nomination.

Ms. Gupta has been a champion for Native women who are subjected to sexual violence and other forms of abuse. As you are well aware, FBI data reveals that Alaska tragically leads the nation in sexual assault and violence against women. This is unacceptable. One way the federal government has sought to address violence against women is through enactment of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), landmark legislation first authored by then-Senator Joe Biden. Before being nominated to serve as the Associate Attorney General, Ms. Gupta led the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, where she championed reauthorization of VAWA, declaring that "[e]veryone deserves to live safe and healthy lives, free from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking." VAWA has continued to support services for domestic violence survivors, and in 2013 the law was reauthorized to reaffirm that Tribal Nations had the inherent power to protect Native women from abuse by non-Indian partners by prosecuting those abusers in tribal court. As you are aware, VAWA must now be reauthorized again, and we appreciate that you are prioritizing its reauthorization along with the Biden Administration.

Deeper than Ms. Gupta's strong recognition of the importance of VAWA, however, is the work she has done to bring together communities and stakeholders to address the problem of violence against women. While Ms. Gupta served as the head of the Civil Rights Division under President Obama, she, together with the Justice Department's Office of Violence against Women and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), issued data-driven guidance on identifying and preventing gender bias in law enforcement responses to sexual assault and domestic violence. The guidance served as the important foundation for assisting law enforcement agencies in their response to sexual assault and domestic violence so that survivors are protected and offenders held accountable. The effort brought together law enforcement leaders, civil rights advocates, and stakeholders to better understand how to better respond to cases of sexual assault and domestic violence.

This type of consensus-building is at the core of who Ms. Gupta has been (and will continue to be) throughout her career. It did not surprise us that she recently earned the complete and uniform support of every major law enforcement organization in the country to serve as Associate Attorney General. Indeed, the President of the National Sheriffs' Association, Dane County's Sheriff Mahoney, noted that Ms. Gupta has "immense credibility" among law enforcement and community leaders, highlighting that she has an ability to bring stakeholders together with uncanny leadership. We strongly believe that this is precisely the type of leader needed in the Justice Department today on behalf of Alaska Natives and all Americans.

We can think of no better nominee to serve as Associate Attorney General than Vanita Gupta. On behalf of our tribal members, we urge you to also support her nomination.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gail Schubert
Board of Directors Chair
Alaska Native Justice Center



Kendra Kloster
Executive Director
Native Peoples Action



Tami Jerue
Executive Director
Alaska Native Women's Resource Center



Dr. Charlene Aqik Apok
Executive Director
Data for Indigenous Justice



Enei Begaye
Executive Director
Native Movement



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