

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

April 16, 2021

The Honorable Richard Durbin, Chairman
The Honorable Charles Grassley, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

The AFL-CIO urges swift confirmation of Kristen Clarke to be Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division in the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) which is charged with enforcing federal statutes that aim to protect every person in the United States from discriminatory treatment. Ms. Clarke is the ideal person to lead this work, which is as consequential today as it was when the Division was created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

Ms. Clarke most recently served as the President and Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (Lawyers Committee). Established in 1963 to engage the private bar in the defense of civil rights, the Lawyer's Committee is now well known for its signature "Election Protection" operation, our nation's largest and longest-running nonpartisan voter assistance program. Under Ms. Clarke's leadership, the Lawyer's Committee expanded its traditional work against discriminatory practices and partnered with the International Association of Chiefs of Police to strengthen the law enforcement response to hate crimes and with the National Sheriffs' Association on 21st Century Community Policing.

Ms. Clarke came to the lawyers Committee after serving as Chief of the Civil Rights Bureau for the New York State Attorney General's Office where she directed one of the country's most robust civil rights dockets. Her accomplishments there include establishing the Religious Rights Unit and securing religious accommodations for employees observing Shabbat, as well as collaborating with sheriffs' offices to improve policing of communities with limited English proficiency. Prior to this role as New York's chief civil rights prosecutor, Ms. Clarke litigated voting rights cases as co-director of the Political Participation Group at the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund (LDF). Her legal career began through the Honors Program in the Civil Rights Division of DOJ, where she served as a career attorney in the Voting Section and as a prosecutor in the Division's Criminal Section.

Ms. Clarke has the skills to address both the historic problems exacerbated by the pandemic and the tremendous new challenges of the 21st Century. Multinational corporations now have expansive power to treat workers as mere commodities in our global economy, while algorithms, databases, artificial intelligence, facial recognition, genetic testing, and other new technologies are known to have a discriminatory impact on those in our most vulnerable communities. With her extensive background and expertise, Ms. Clark is exactly the right candidate to lead the DOJ Civil Rights Division. The AFL-CIO urges her swift confirmation.

Sincerely,



William Samuel
Director, Government Affairs