

December 4, 2020

Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President-Elect of the United States of America  
Presidential Transition Office  
1401 Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear President-Elect Biden:

We write to urge you to nominate Julie Su as United States Secretary of Labor. At a time when the role of Labor Secretary could not be more critical to the nation's well-being and the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is no better person than Julie Su to lead a Labor Department that centers the needs of working people. As the Secretary for the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, the largest state labor department in the country, Ms. Su currently leads an agency of more than 11,000 employees with a \$26.4 billion budget. In this role, she oversees worker safety, paid leave, and jobless benefit programs for nearly 20 million Californians, well-preparing her to be immediately effective upon stepping into the role of Labor Secretary. Over a career spanning decades dedicated to advancing justice for under-represented communities, she has shown herself to be a visionary and innovative leader who will be able to maximize the impact the Labor Department can have in addressing economic inequality and racial injustice.

Over the course of nearly ten years in office, Julie Su has developed a track record of reinvigorating labor agencies to deliver on their mission. She has redefined effective labor law enforcement through targeted, industry-specific investigative approaches, responsive partnerships with labor unions and worker organizations, creative public education campaigns, and smart relationships with employers and industry associations. Her deep familiarity with the systemic barriers faced by low-wage workers, who are often immigrants and/or people of color, has allowed her to pioneer successful new approaches to combating the scourges of worker misclassification and retaliation. Her nuanced understanding of the intersections between racism, sexism, and labor exploitation will be urgently needed in a role that has significant responsibility for bringing greater gender and racial equality to U.S. workplaces.

Before her time in California government, Ms. Su spent fifteen years at Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles where she was known for combining impact litigation with multi-racial organizing, community education, policy reform, coalition building, and media work. She was among the lead counsel in a federal lawsuit that held brand name garment manufacturers and retailers liable for the slave labor conditions of subcontractors' sweatshops, obtaining a multi-million dollar settlement and earning the workers involved legal immigration status. The cases she litigated, in addition to her legislative advocacy, helped spur the passage of AB633, a landmark law that ensured brand name retailers would be held responsible if the garment workers who sewed their apparel experienced wage theft.

President-Elect Biden, you have pledged to make your cabinet the most diverse in history with leaders who look like and reflect the breadth and diversity of our country. As a woman of color who grew up in an immigrant household, Julie Su embodies that diversity and shares your commitment to racial equity. She has also received the MacArthur "Genius Grant" and has been named one of the "Fifty Most Noteworthy Women Alumni" of Harvard Law School. She has spent her career passionately advocating for

marginalized workers and has managed and built the most diverse team at the highest levels of state government in the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. It is a critical time for the leadership of women and people of color in our country, and Julie Su is a proven leader who will represent and promote equity, equal opportunities, and inclusion for all.

The COVID-19 pandemic, rising rates of economic inequality, and this year's reckoning on the need for racial justice and equity demand that we put people at the center of our rebuilding efforts in 2021 and beyond. We must expand the role that a responsive government can play in protecting workers' rights and advancing economic security. Julie Su is the right person to lead this critical work at the Labor Department during this unprecedented time, and we give her our strongest endorsement.

Sincerely yours,

### **National Organizations**

Advancement Project, National Office  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante  
Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking  
Community Change Action  
Family Values @ Work  
Farmworker Justice  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Justice Action Center  
Laotian American National Alliance  
MomsRising  
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)  
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)  
National Association of Asian American Professionals  
National Black Worker Center  
National Center for Housing & Child Welfare  
National Center for Law and Economic Justice  
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Immigration Law Center Immigrant Justice Fund  
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)  
National Legal Advocacy Network  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates  
One Fair Wage, Inc  
Resilience Force  
SPLC Action Fund  
The Center for Asian Pacific American Women  
UFW Foundation

United Farm Workers of America

### **Regional, State, and Local Organizations**

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Chicago  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles  
Asian Resources, Inc  
Bet Tzedek Legal Services  
Border Workers United  
California Association of Food Banks  
California Employment Lawyers Association  
California Immigrant Policy Center  
Center for the Advancement of Racial Equity at Work  
Center for Workers' Rights  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)  
Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible  
CRLA Foundation  
Employee Rights Center  
Foundation for Advocacy, Inclusion & Resources  
Garment Worker Center  
IE Black Worker Center Project  
Inland Empire Labor Council, AFL-CIO  
Justice For Muslims Collective  
KIWA  
La Raza Centro Legal  
Legal Aid of Marin  
Maintenance Cooperation Trust Fund (MCTF)  
Northwest Workers' Justice Project  
Ohio Immigrant Alliance  
Public Justice Center  
Santa Clara County Wage Theft Coalition  
Southern California Resource Hub for Black Worker Organizing  
Still Waters Anti-trafficking Program of RCHP-AHC  
UC Irvine Law School, Immigrant Rights Clinic  
UCLA Labor Center  
Unidad Latina en Acción CT  
Wage Justice Center  
Women's Employment Rights Clinic, Golden Gate University  
Worker Justice Center of New York  
Worksafe