



November 21, 2018

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema
Senator-Elect
825B Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator-Elect Sinema:

Congratulations on your election to the United State Senate. This is a time of great staff transition, and as you prepare to fill openings in your new office, we believe that you should prioritize racial diversity in your hiring, particularly among your personal office top staff (e.g., chief of staff, legislative director, and communications director) and mid-level staff (e.g., legislative assistant, counsel, policy advisor, press secretary, administrative director).

As you may know, the Joint Center's September 2018 Report, [*Racial Diversity Among Top U.S. House Staff*](#), revealed that people of color accounted for 38 percent of the U.S. population, but only 13.7 percent of top House staff. [*The Joint Center's earlier report*](#) found that the U.S. Senate was even less diverse, with people of color accounting for only 7.1 percent of top Senate staff.

In our September 2018 report, your U.S. House office was found to have no top staff of color despite being elected from a district that was 43.9 percent people of color. According to Census data, as Senator of Arizona you will represent a constituency that is 43.8 percent people of color.

You have an opportunity to start to change these statistics over the next few months as you hire top staff and mid-level staff for your offices, and we urge you to immediately implement some of the reforms that Senate Democrats have adopted recently, including the Rooney Rule, which requires you to interview at least one person of color for each top staff position.

In addition to hiring diverse top and mid-level staffers, we urge you to take the following steps immediately in preparation for the 116th Congress:

1. ***Clear Goals:*** Promptly develop hiring goals to ensure racial diversity among those hired in new top and key mid-level staff position openings in your office.
2. ***Adopt a Diversity Plan:*** Develop a written office diversity and inclusion plan that includes recruitment and hiring goals, retention and development strategies for staff, data collection and analysis procedures, a clear allocation of responsibility among staff and performance evaluation for implementation of the plan, and unconscious bias training for all managerial staff involved in recruitment, hiring, evaluation, and retention.



3. ***Rooney Rule:*** Formally implement the Rooney Rule, which the Senate Democratic Caucus adopted in 2017. This rule requires your office to interview at least one person of color for every top staff position. One of the chief factors in perpetuating the lack of diversity among senior levels has been the lack of recruitment of qualified people of color for senior positions. We believe that the Rooney Rule should be applied to key mid-level staff position openings as well, as a diverse mid-level staff is important in ensuring a pool of candidates for top positions in the future. Data should be kept to measure compliance with the rule and the effectiveness of the rule.

4. ***Support Chamber-Wide or Conference-Wide Efforts to Improve Staff Diversity,*** such as the creation of an independent and bipartisan Diversity Office.

In the new Congress, top staffers and key mid-level staffers will have significant influence in developing legislation, providing oversight of hundreds of administrative agencies that employ over three million civilian and military workers, and a multi-trillion dollar budget and appropriations process that affects all of your constituents and our entire nation.

Although you already have a U.S. House staff, you have the opportunity to significantly expand your office and fulfill a promise to your constituents to be an effective representative of all Arizonans. You have an opportunity to show your constituents that the experiences and skills of all Americans are vital to your work. Ensuring racial diversity among your staff would enhance the deliberation, innovation, legitimacy, and outcomes of your office and of the chamber as a whole.

We look forward to working with you.

Regards,

Spencer Overton
President
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies