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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES



RACIAL DIVERSITY AMONG TOP STAFF OF THE PENNSYLVANIA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Personal and Full Committee Office Diversity.....	7
House vs. Senate Top Staff Diversity.....	8
Political Party Diversity.....	9
Racial Diversity Among Top Staff.....	11
The Pipeline: Racial Diversity Among Mid-Level Senate Staff.....	13
Gender Among Top Staff.....	15
Recommendations.....	16
About the Authors.....	18
Acknowledgments.....	19

Executive Summary

This report examines the racial diversity among the 52 top staffers of the U.S. House and U.S. Senate Members who represent Pennsylvania. This report defines top staff (or “key” or “senior” staff) to include: chiefs of staff, legislative directors, and communications directors in Washington, D.C. personal offices; and staff directors assigned to full committees. The data reflect employment on June 1, 2018. Key findings show:

- People of color account for nearly a quarter (23 percent) of Pennsylvania’s population, but they account for less than 10 percent of the top staffers who work for the U.S. House and U.S. Senate Members who represent Pennsylvania. Compared with their proportion of Pennsylvania’s residents, every community of color is underrepresented among congressional top staff.
- Of the 18 elected Members of the Pennsylvania delegation, just three have at least one top staffer of color—Rep. Dwight Evans (D-PA 2), Rep. Robert Brady (D-PA 1), and Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA 8).
- While Pennsylvanians who identify as Latina/o or Asian American/Pacific Islander collectively account for 9.5 percent of the state’s population, they account for none (0 percent) of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation’s 52 top staffers.
- Pennsylvania’s two U.S. Senators collectively have seven top staff positions. None of them are held by people of color.
- Mid-level staff positions are important “feeder” positions for top staff positions. In the U.S. Senate offices that represent Pennsylvania, three of the 25 mid-level staffers are people of color (12 percent). All three work for the state’s Democratic U.S. Senator, Bob Casey, Jr. None work for the state’s Republican U.S. Senator, Pat Toomey.
- People of color accounted for 26 percent of the Democratic Party’s voters in Pennsylvania in 2016 and 22 percent of the top staffers who work for the Democratic U.S. House Members from Pennsylvania. People of color accounted for none of the top staff (0 percent) and less than 18 percent of the mid-level staff of Senator Casey.
- People of color accounted for 4 percent of the Republican Party’s voters in Pennsylvania in 2016 and almost 4 percent of the top staff who work for the state’s Republican U.S. House Members. People of color accounted for none of the top staffers or mid-level staffers who work for Senator Toomey.
- Of the Pennsylvania delegation’s 52 top staffers, 19, or 36.5 percent, are women. This percentage is roughly consistent regardless of party or chamber. Of the women top staffers, 17 are White and two are Black.

Table 1: Top Staff Diversity in Washington, D.C. Personal and Full Committee Offices of Pennsylvania’s U.S. House & Senate Members (in percentages and raw numbers)

Race	Percentage of Pennsylvania Population	Number of Top U.S. House & Senate Staff	Percentage of Top U.S. House & Senate Staff
White	75.5	47	90.4
African American	10.7	4	7.7
Latina/o	6.4	0	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	3.1	0	0
Native American	0.2	0	0
Bi/Multiracial	2.2	1	1.9
TOTAL	98.1	52	100

Note: 1.9 percent of Pennsylvania’s population is listed as “some other race alone” according to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Note: The 7th and 15th congressional districts of Pennsylvania are vacant.

Introduction

This study analyzes the racial diversity of top staff in Washington, D.C. who work for the U.S. House Members and U.S. Senators who represent Pennsylvania.

Hiring top staffers of color is not an act of charity. It is the right thing to do, and it results in better public policy. Diverse top staffers allow a Member to understand her or his constituents and effectively represent them in Congress. Economic and sociological studies demonstrate that diverse work teams lead to greater productivity, help organizations establish trust with their clients, and help organizations make more innovative decisions.¹ Diversity among top staff would also facilitate diversity in other sectors in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, because top staff positions are pathways to other high-ranking positions in government, the private sector, and the nonprofit sector.

Unfortunately, although people of color account for 22.6 percent of Pennsylvania’s population,² only 5 out of 52 (9.6 percent) of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation’s top staff are people of color.

The Positions Analyzed in This Report

Members in both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate each have a “personal office” in Washington, D.C. that helps them represent their state or district. Most Members have three top positions in their personal offices: chief of staff, legislative director, and communications director. In addition, Members serve on committees and oversee committee staff. Each full committee is led by a Chair who is a Member of the majority party, and most committees have a majority staff director who works under the Chair. The minority party’s committee Members are led by a Ranking Member, who generally oversees a minority staff director.

Like the Joint Center’s previous studies, this report focuses on full committee staff directors and the top three personal office positions: chief of staff, legislative director, and communications director. The structure of each office varies, but these positions are the most consistent throughout each office, and they provide a comprehensive assessment of top staff diversity.

Persons holding these positions are invested with hiring and firing powers, and they are given immense latitude in legislative and policy development. Collectively, these top staff manage a federal budget of over \$4 trillion and provide oversight of hundreds of government agencies

with over 3 million civilian and military employees. Top staff are often the public face of the office as they meet with Members, staffers, lobbyists, constituents, the media, and advocacy organizations. Top staff in the U.S. Senate also manage the confirmation process for commissioners, judges, ambassadors, and other appointees.

While some Members deem their state directors and district directors as top staff, this report focuses on top staff diversity in Washington, D.C. offices. Top staff in Washington, D.C. are often less visible to constituents in Pennsylvania than state staff. In addition, top staff in Washington, D.C. often engage more directly with other congressional offices in negotiating federal legislation, appropriations, agency oversight, and the confirmation process. Recognizing that in some offices the state director is a “feeder” position to becoming chief of staff, this report analyzes the diversity of state directors along with U.S. Senate mid-level positions in Table 7, which can be found later in this report. Senator Casey’s office considers a few positions (e.g., outreach director and regional office director) as “top staff,” but these are not included in our calculations so that we can consistently apply our methodology to all offices within the Pennsylvania congressional delegation.

Even though this report focuses on top staff in both chambers and contains a section on mid-level “feeder” positions in the U.S. Senate (see “The Pipeline: Racial Diversity Among Mid-Level Senate Staff”), people of color are employed in other positions that make significant contributions to congressional offices. This report, however, highlights a crucial issue—that few people of color hold senior-level positions. While there may be influential individual staffers of color who are not calculated in the data because their title is not included in our analysis, this fact should not deflect from the larger insight that the top staff positions examined in this report do not reflect the racial diversity of Pennsylvania. This is a structural challenge for the entire Pennsylvania delegation and the institution of Congress as a whole, rather than a problem attributable to a single Member or a single political party.

Methodology

The Census Bureau defines *race* as a person’s self-identification with one or more social groups. This report contains five racial categories: White, African American, Latina/o, Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI), and Native American. The terms *African American* and *Black* are used interchangeably throughout the report. The report also includes a category for staffers who identify as biracial or multiracial to ensure that each individual is accurately represented.

Initially, the authors used LegiStorm to identify staff. It's a database that contains the most comprehensive and accurate biographical and contact data for each Member and congressional staffer. Data reflect employment in the U.S. House and U.S. Senate on June 1, 2018.

To initially identify the race of each staffer, the authors used photographs from LegiStorm and visited social networking sites—such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter—listed for each staffer. The authors also reviewed Roll Call, constituent photographs, news clippings, and press releases. LegiStorm's database includes the gender of each staffer.

Researchers emailed the data the authors collected to staffers in each personal and committee office to provide an opportunity for the offices to correct any errors. The email listed all identified top staff of color by name and position in the office (or indicated that the data showed that the office had no top staff of color). The email asked the recipients to reply and correct any errors. Offices that did not respond were emailed at least two more times and given an opportunity to correct the data. Emails sent to the U.S. Senate also included data on mid-level “feeder” positions (defined below in the section entitled “The Pipeline: Racial Diversity Among Mid-Level Senate Staff”).

The authors provided additional opportunities to congressional staffers to correct the data. In the U.S. Senate, for example, a paper letter was hand delivered to each office. Also, the Asian American/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, and Native American staff associations sent relevant parts of the data to their members who work as staffers in the Senate. For example, the Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus sent data on Black top and mid-level staff to their members who work in the Senate and asked whether anyone was missing. In the U.S. House the authors took additional steps, which are outlined in the Joint Center's September 2018 report, *Diversity Among Top U.S. House Staff*.³

After this entire process, the researchers lacked racial information for 3 of the 52 top staffers in Pennsylvania (about 6 percent). For the purposes of calculating racial diversity, this report classifies these 3 staffers as White.

Due to rounding, total percentages presented throughout this document may not add up to 100 percent precisely.

Personal & Full Committee Office Diversity

This section analyzes each of the top staffers who work for Pennsylvania congressional Members in Washington, D.C. personal offices (chief of staff, legislative director, and communications director) and full committees (staff director).

Three Members of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation oversee staff directors of full committees due to their leadership roles. Congressman Bill Shuster is Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and Congressman Robert Brady is Ranking Member of the Committee on House Administration. Senator Bob Casey is Ranking Member of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, and when he assumed that position he removed the Senate’s only Black staff director of a full committee (there are currently no Black or Latino staff directors of full committees in the U.S. Senate).

Of the 52 staffers who serve as full committee staff directors, personal office chiefs of staff, legislative directors, and communications directors for the U.S. House and U.S. Senate Members representing Pennsylvania, 5 are people of color (9.6 percent). This is significantly less than the 22.6 percent of Pennsylvania’s population who identify as people of color.

Table 2: Top Staff Diversity in Washington, D.C. Personal and Full Committee Offices of Pennsylvania’s U.S. House & U.S. Senate Members by Position (in raw numbers)

Race	Chief of Staff	Legislative Director	Communications Director	Staff Director
White	16	14	14	3
African American	2	1	1	0
Latina/o	0	0	0	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Native American	0	0	0	0
Bi/Multiracial	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	18	16	15	3

House vs. Senate Top Staff Diversity

In the U.S. Senate, the complete lack of racial diversity among top staff representing Pennsylvania is particularly stark, even when compared to the minimal diversity among top staff in the U.S. Senate nationwide. In Pennsylvania, people of color make up 22.6 percent of the population, 11.1 percent of the top U.S. House staff, and none of the top U.S. Senate staff. The Joint Center’s 2015 Senate and 2018 House reports found that nationwide, people of color accounted for 38 percent of the population, 13.7 percent of top U.S. House staff, and 7.1 percent of top U.S. Senate staff. ⁴

Table 3: Racial Representation of Pennsylvania U.S. House Top Staff and Pennsylvania U.S. Senate Top Staff (in percentages)

Race	Pennsylvania Population	Pennsylvania U.S. House Top Staff	Pennsylvania U.S. Senate Top Staff
White	75.5	88.9	100
African American	10.7	8.9	0
Latina/o	6.4	0	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	3.1	0	0
Native American	0.2	0	0
Bi/Multiracial	2.2	2.2	0
TOTAL	98.1	100	100

Note: 1.9 percent of Pennsylvania’s population is listed as “some other race alone” according to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Political Party Diversity

Of the 52 top staff in the Pennsylvania congressional delegation, 30 work for Republicans, and one of these is a person of color. Of the 22 top staff who work for Democrats, four are people of color.

Table 4: Racial Representation of U.S. House and U.S. Senate Top Staff Representing Pennsylvania by Political Party (in raw numbers)

Race	Republican	Democratic
White	29	18
African American	0	4
Latina/o	0	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0	0
Native American	0	0
Bi/Multiracial	1	0
TOTAL	30	22

People of color accounted for 26 percent of the total Democratic Party turnout in Pennsylvania in 2016,⁵ 22.22 percent of the top staffers who work for the Democratic U.S. House Members from Pennsylvania, and none of the top staff (0 percent) of the state’s Democratic U.S. Senator, Bob Casey Jr.

People of color accounted for 4 percent of the Republican Party’s voters in Pennsylvania in 2016, almost 4 percent of the top staff who work for the state’s Republican U.S. House Members, and none of the top staffers who work for Pennsylvania’s Republican U.S. Senator, Pat Toomey.

Table 5: Racial Representation of Top U.S. House and U.S. Senate Staff Compared with Pennsylvania Party 2016 Turnout (in percentages)

Race	% of Total Republican Party Turnout in Pennsylvania in 2016	% of Pennsylvania Republican U.S. House & Senate Top Staff	% of Total Democratic Party Turnout in Pennsylvania in 2016	% of Pennsylvania Democratic U.S. House & Senate Top Staff
White	97	96.7	75	81.8
African American	2	0	19	18.2
Latina/o	1	0	5	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	1	0	2	0
Native American	0	0	0	0
Bi/Multiracial	0	3.3	0	0
TOTAL	101	100	101	100

Note: Percentage of Party Turnout in Pennsylvania in 2016 data was provided by [BlueLabs](#), an analytics and technology company.

The heavy reliance of Black votes may be a compelling reason to enhance top staff diversity among Democratic Members, but voting performance should not be an excuse for Republican Members in Pennsylvania to disregard racial diversity or to believe it is impossible to find top staff of color. The Joint Center’s 2015 report found that Republican U.S. Senators nationwide had more Black top staff than did Democratic U.S. Senators. In the U.S. House, White Republican Members have more chiefs of staff of color than do White Democrats, and Speaker Paul Ryan has a Black chief of staff of his leadership office.⁶

Racial Diversity Among Top Staff

Table 6 details the racial demographics of the area represented by each Member of the Pennsylvania delegation and the top staff who work for each Member. Of the 313 U.S. House Members nationwide who have no top staff of color, 13 come from Pennsylvania.

The five top staff of color in Pennsylvania all work for one of just three Members—Rep. Dwight Evans (D-PA 2), Rep. Robert Brady (D-PA 1), and Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA 8). These three Members employ 100 percent of Pennsylvania’s top staff of color, despite the fact that they represent only 36.3 percent of Pennsylvania’s residents of color.⁷ The other 13 House members and two U.S. Senators have 47 top staff spots—none of which are held by a person of color.

Table 6: Comparison of Top Staff to Population Represented by Member

Member	District	% Non-White Residents	% Non-White Top Staff
Rep. Evans-D	PA-2	70.70%	100%
Rep. Brady-D	PA-1	60.50%	50%
Rep. Boyle-D	PA-13	42.00%	0%
Rep. Doyle-D	PA-14	30.20%	0%
Rep. Smucker-R	PA-16	27.80%	0%
Sen. Casey-D	Statewide	22.60%	0%
Sen. Toomey-R	Statewide	22.60%	0%
Rep. Perry-R	PA-14	19.20%	0%
Rep. Cartwright-D	PA-17	17.90%	0%
Rep. Costello-R	PA-6	17.10%	0%
Rep. B. Fitzpatrick-R	PA-8	15.20%	33%
Rep. Barletta-R	PA-11	14.40%	0%
Rep. Marino-R	PA-10	10.10%	0%
Rep. Kelly-R	PA-3	9.90%	0%
Rep. Rothfus-R	PA-12	8.10%	0%
Rep. Thompson-R	PA-5	7.80%	0%
Rep. Lamb-D	PA-18	7.40%	0%
Rep. Shuster-R	PA-9	7.30%	0%

The Pipeline: Racial Diversity Among Mid-Level Senate Staff

The diversity of mid-level “feeder” staff positions provides one indicator to predict future diversity among top staff. An examination of current mid-level staff provides a rough snapshot of part of the pool of talent that is currently gaining the relevant experiences and developing the relationships needed for promotion to top staff in the future.

The data in Table 7 reflect the racial diversity of staff in significant mid-level administrative, policy, and communication positions who work for U.S. Senators Bob Casey and Pat Toomey. Senator Casey oversees mid-level staff in his personal office and as Ranking Member of the Senate Special Committee on Aging and as Ranking Member of the Children and Families Subcommittee of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Senator Toomey oversees mid-level staff in his personal office and as Chair of the Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection Subcommittee of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, and as Chair of the Health Care Subcommittee of the Finance Committee.

To avoid double counting, we categorized a Senate Pat Toomey staffer who was a personal office legislative assistant and subcommittee staff director as one mid-level staffer.

Resource constraints limited the analysis of “feeder” positions to the two U.S. Senators, but future Joint Center research may include an analysis of feeder positions in the U.S. House.

For the purposes of Table 7, “mid-level” positions include:

- Staff in the Washington, D.C. personal offices with the following titles: deputy chief of staff, administrative director, deputy legislative director, legislative assistant or equivalent (e.g., counsel, senior counsel, general counsel, chief counsel, special counsel, policy advisor), deputy communications director, or press secretary.
- State directors, because this position serves as a “feeder” position to chief of staff in some offices.
- Subcommittee staff directors and full committee or subcommittee staff who work under either Senator Toomey or Senator Casey with the following titles: chief clerk, deputy chief clerk, deputy staff director, policy director, communications director, deputy

communications director, general counsel, deputy general counsel, senior policy advisor, policy advisor, budget director, or professional staff member.

Table 7: The Pipeline: Racial Representation of Pennsylvania U.S. Senate Mid-Level Staff (in raw numbers and percentages)

Race	Sen. Casey Raw Number	Sen. Casey Percentage	Sen. Toomey Raw Number	Sen. Toomey Percentage
White	14	82.4	8	100
African American	2	11.8	0	0
Latina/o	1	5.9	0	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Native American	0	0	0	0
Bi/Multiracial	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	17	100.1	8	100

Gender Among Top Staff

Of the 52 top staffers who work for Members from Pennsylvania, 19 are women. Two are women of color and both are African American. Among the 33 top staffers who are men, three are staffers of color. Two are African American and one is Bi/Multiracial.

Table 8: Gender Breakdown among Top Staff of Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation by Race (in percentages)

Race	Women	Men
White	36.2	63.8
African American	50	50
Latino/a	0	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0	0
Native American	0	0
Bi/Multiracial	0	100

Table 9: Percentage of Top Staff of U.S. House and Senate Members from Pennsylvania Who Are Women (in percentages)

Pennsylvania Members...	Women Top Staffers
U.S. House & Senate combined	36.5
U.S. House Only	35.6
U.S. Senate Only	42.9
Republicans	36.7
Democrats	36.4

Recommendations

No single solution to the lack of racial diversity among top staff of Pennsylvania’s congressional delegation is sufficient. Change requires a clear commitment, strategic implementation, and monitoring of progress by Members. Individual U.S. Senate and U.S. House Members can take several steps to improve and maintain diversity in their offices:

- **Develop a written office diversity plan**, just as an office develops its own budget. The plan should include recruitment and hiring goals, as well as strategies that will be employed to retain people of color once they are hired. Existing staff should be tasked with implementing the plan, and Members should monitor and evaluate the performance of individual staff members and the office as a whole.
- **Track and annually disclose staff office demographic data.** It is difficult to fix a problem that goes unmeasured. Congress requires this disclosure from many federal agencies, government contractors, and other work organizations. Members of Congress should measure this same data and disclose it to their constituents.⁸
- **Adopt a version of the National Football League’s “Rooney Rule,”** which requires that an office interview at least one candidate of color for each vacant senior position.
- **Recruit diverse interns from Pennsylvania, and pay them.** Unpaid internships often limit internship opportunities to young people from affluent families, and that creates a pool of talent for entry-level positions that does not reflect the diversity of Pennsylvania. This entry-level pool eventually shapes the talent pool for mid-level and top staff positions. Members should also recruit interns and fellows from the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS), the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF), INSIGHT America, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI), the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute (CHLI), and the GW Native American Political Leadership Program (NAPLP).
- **Build a diverse pipeline of mid-level staff.** Ensure robust diversity among legislative assistants, counsel, press secretaries, and other mid-level positions. Provide regular feedback and opportunities for growth. A diverse mid-level staff increases the probability of diverse top staff in the future.

- **Consult with colleagues who have diverse staffs and with staff associations of color** for ideas on recruitment and retention. Many congressional staff associations of color already have informal partnerships with offices and hiring managers in the U.S. House and U.S. Senate. Formalize these relationships, and create an integrated database of candidates for staff positions.
- **Obtain unconscious bias training** for the Member, the chief of staff, and all managerial staff involved in recruitment, hiring, evaluation, and retention.

About the Authors

Karra W. McCray is a recent Master's graduate of Howard University. She earned a Political Science degree with concentrations in Black Politics and American Government. Her research interests include the study of the use of crime as an electoral weapon among candidates and the study of voter disenfranchisement among Black voters. Karra has also worked as a Legislative Aide for the South Carolina House of Representatives. She received her undergraduate degree in Political Science and English from the University of South Carolina.

Don Bell is the Director of the Black Talent Initiative at the Joint Center. Prior to this position, Don worked as a legal fellow to Senator Chris Murphy, judiciary staffer to Senator Richard Blumenthal, and associate counsel and then counsel to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Don also served as President of the Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus (SBLSC). During his term, he conducted a groundbreaking census of Black Senate staffers that inspired a movement toward greater diversity and inclusion in policy making on Capitol Hill. Don received his B.A. and law degree from the University of Connecticut.

Spencer Overton is the President of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. Spencer is also a tenured Professor of Law at George Washington University, and he has written a book and several other publications on race and equity. Spencer led several projects on the 2008 Obama presidential campaign and transition team, and during the Administration he served as Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General of Legal Policy at the Department of Justice. He clerked for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Damon J. Keith of the Sixth Court, and graduated with honors from both Hampton University and Harvard Law School. Spencer's fourth great-grandfather Abraham Doras Shadd, was a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad from his home in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and would later become the first Black person to hold public office in Canada.

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¹ Page, Scott E. 2008. *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Levine, Sheen S., Evan P. Apfelbaum, Mark Bernard, Valerie L. Bartelt, Edward J. Zajac, and David Stark. 2014. "Ethnic Diversity Deflates Price Bubbles." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 111(52):18524-29.

² U.S. Census Bureau. n.d. "ACS 2012-2016 Five Year Estimates" https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_5YR_DP05&src=pt

³ Scott, Elsie L., Karra W. McCray, Donald Bell, and Spencer Overton. 2018. *Diversity Among Top U.S. House Staff*. Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (see methodology on pages 7-10). The Pennsylvania U.S. House top staff data in this report comes from the Joint Center's *Diversity Among Top U.S. House Staff* report, and the Joint Center subsequently researched the Pennsylvania U.S. Senate top and mid-level staff using a similar methodology tailored to the unique characteristics of the U.S. Senate.

⁴ Scott, Elsie L., Karra W. McCray, Donald Bell, and Spencer Overton. 2018. *Diversity Among Top U.S. House Staff*. Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; Jones, James R. 2015. *Diversity Among Top Senate Staff*. Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

⁵ Percentage of Party turnout data in Pennsylvania was provided by [BlueLabs](#), an analytics and technology company.

⁶ Scott, Elsie L., Karra W. McCray, Donald Bell, and Spencer Overton. 2018. *Diversity Among Top U.S. House Staff*. Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; Jones, James R. 2015. *Diversity Among Top Senate Staff*. Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey Estimates for 115th Congress. <https://www.census.gov/mycd/>

⁸ U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. "EEO Reports / Surveys." <http://www.eeoc.gov/employers/reporting.cfm>

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