



December 10, 2018

The Honorable Jason Smith
Republican Conference Secretary
United States House of Representatives
1118 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Considering Top and Key Mid-Level Staff Diversity of Members' Offices in Making Committee Appointments

Dear Representative Smith:

As one of the leaders of the Republican Conference responsible for recommending Members to serve on committees in the 116th Congress, you have an immediate opportunity to emphasize the importance of top staff diversity.

We ask that you make the diversity of a Member's staff a factor in deciding whether to recommend a Member to serve on a particular committee. To do this, we urge you to assess the diversity of a Member's top staff (e.g., chief of staff, legislative director, and communications director) and key mid-level staff that are in "feeder" positions for top positions (e.g., deputy chief of staff, deputy legislative director, deputy communications director, district director, legislative assistant, counsel, policy advisor, press secretary, and administrative director).

If the Member was a Chair of a committee in the 115th Congress, we also ask you to factor in the diversity of the Chair's committee staff who are in the positions of staff director, deputy staff director, chief clerk, deputy chief clerk, policy director, communications director, deputy communications director, general counsel, deputy general counsel, counsel, senior policy advisor, policy advisor, budget director, and professional staff member.

As you know, the Joint Center's September 2018 report, [*Racial Diversity Among U.S. Top House Staff*](#), revealed various details about the diversity of staffs as of June 1, 2018, including:

- People of color make up 38% of the U.S. population, but only 13.7% of all top House staff.
- Nearly three-quarters (313 Members) of U.S. House Members have an office in which not one person of color serves in any of the following positions—chief of staff, legislative director, or communications director.



- There are no Latina/os, AAPIs, or Native Americans who serve as full committee staff directors or leadership office chiefs of staff, policy directors, or communications directors.
- White Republican Members represent districts with populations that are on average 26 percent people of color, but only 3 percent of those employed as chiefs of staff, legislative directors, and communications directors by White Republican Members are people of color.
- Republican Congressional Hispanic Conference Members on average have districts that are 50.3 percent Latina/o, but half of Congressional Hispanic Conference Members have an office in which not one Latina/o serves in any of the following positions—chief of staff, legislative director, or communications director.

In the new Congress, senior and key mid-level staffers will help develop legislation, manage offices, hire employees, and work with elected Members to respond during times of crisis. These staffers will have significant influence in 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 every American.

As one of the leaders of the Republican Conference, you are uniquely positioned to take definitive action and ensure that Congress is truly representative of our entire nation. We urge you to *prioritize diversity* among top and key mid-level committee staff and to make it *a reality* in the 116th Congress.

We look forward to working with you.

Regards,

Spencer Overton
President
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies