

## Supporters of Diversity Among Top Congressional Staff

December 3, 2018

Members of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC

Dear New and Returning Members of Congress:

Congratulations on your election to the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. This is a time of great staff transition, and as you prepare to fill openings in your office, we believe that you should establish a culture of diversity and inclusion.

We are writing to ask you to prioritize diversity in your hiring, particularly among your personal office top staff (e.g., chief of staff, legislative director, and communications director) and key mid-level staff (e.g., legislative assistant, counsel, policy advisor, press secretary, administrative director). If you will hold a committee or subcommittee leadership position, we also ask that you prioritize diversity when filling any openings for 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 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 staff.

You have an opportunity to start to change these statistics over the next few months as you hire top staff and key mid-level staff for your offices. This is especially true for newly elected Members who are building an entire personal office staff, House committee Ranking Members who are transitioning to Chairs and are doubling their committee staff, and new committee Chairs and Ranking Members in both chambers who are building their committee staff.

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

1. **Set Clear Goals:** Promptly develop hiring goals to ensure 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. ***Adopt the Rooney Rule:*** Formally adopt and implement the Rooney Rule, which would require your office to interview at least one person of color for every top and key mid-level staff position opening. Senate Democrats adopted this rule in 2017. Data should be kept to measure the compliance and 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, the disclosure of demographic data of staff, and adoption of the Rooney Rule.

In the new Congress, top and key mid-level staffers will have significant influence in developing legislation. They also play a critical role in the oversight of hundreds of administrative agencies that employ over three million civilian and military workers and a multi-trillion-dollar budget and appropriations process.

The experiences and skills of all Americans are vital to your work. Ensuring diversity among your staff will 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,

1882 Project Foundation  
AAPI Progressive Action  
Access Now  
Americans for Financial Reform and Americans for Financial Reform Education Fund  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)  
Asian American Action Fund  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC  
Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)  
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO  
Center for American Progress  
Chinese American Citizens Alliance  
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces  
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute  
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)  
D&P Creative Strategies, LLC  
Diversity Declaration Steering Group/Diversity Matters  
Earthjustice  
Ecumenical Poverty Initiative  
Equal Pay Today  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Equality California  
Federally Employed Women  
Hip Hop Caucus

Hmong American Partnership  
Hmong National Development  
Human Rights Campaign Impact Fund  
Inclusv  
Indian American Impact  
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies  
The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics  
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)  
MANA, A National Latina Organization  
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)  
NALEO Educational Fund  
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse (NAPAFASA)  
National Action Network  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)  
National Council of Negro Women  
National Education Association  
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators  
National Medical Malpractice Advocacy Association  
National Organization for Women  
National Organization of Black County Officials, Inc. (NOBCO)  
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)  
National Urban League  
National Women's Law Center  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates  
OCA - Greater Houston  
Pay Our Interns  
People For the American Way  
PODER PAC  
Pride at Work  
Solidarity Strategies  
South Asian Bar Association of North America  
South Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship and Training (SAFEST)  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
UnidosUS  
United Methodist General Board of Church and Society  
Voices for Progress  
Washington Government Relations Group (WGRG)  
Women Employed  
Working IDEAL