
RACIAL DIVERSITY AMONG TOP STAFF IN SENATE PERSONAL OFFICES

LaShonda Brenson, Ph.D.

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Executive Summary

This report provides evidence regarding the lack of racial diversity among U.S. Senate personal office top staff positions. This report defines personal office top staff as all chiefs of staff, legislative directors, and communications directors in the Washington, DC personal offices of U.S. Senators. The data reflect Senate employment as of January 2020. Key findings show:

- **People of color make up 40% of the U.S. population, but only 11% of all Senate personal office top staff.** Latina/os make up 18.5% of the U.S. population, but only 3.8% of Senate personal office top staffers. African Americans account for 13.4% of the U.S. population, but only 3.1% of Senate personal office top staffers. Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders are 6.1% of the U.S. population, but only 2.7% of Senate personal office top staffers.
- **Senate personal offices representing states with large shares of Black or Latina/o residents hire relatively few Black or Latina/o top staffers.** African Americans account for an average of 27.1% of the population in ten states (AL, DE, GA, LA, MD, MS, NC, SC, NY, and VA), yet hold only 3.5% of the total top staff positions in these states' U.S. Senate personal offices. Latina/os account for an average of 29.4% of the population in ten states (AZ, CA, CO, FL, IL, NV, NJ, NM, NY, and TX), yet hold 13.6% of the top staff positions in these states' Senate personal offices.
- **While Democrats employ more personal office top staff of color than Republicans, both parties have low numbers, and the Republicans' percentage is closer to their party's share of voters who are people of color.** People of color make up 14% of registered voters who identify as Republicans and 4% of Republican Senate personal office top staff. People of color account for 39% of self-identified Democratic registered voters, but only 19% of Democratic Senate personal office top staff. African Americans are 19% of Democratic registered voters, but only 5% of Democratic Senate personal office top staff.

- **The three states with the highest share of Black residents that are represented by two Democratic U.S. Senators have no Black personal office top staff.** On average, African Americans account for 24.7% of the residents and 39.3% of the 2016 Democratic Party turnout in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, but none (0%) of the 17 top staff positions in the Senate personal offices of these states. The three states with the highest share of African American residents represented by two Republican U.S. Senators (Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi) also have no Black personal office top staff.
- **Between 2015 and 2020, the overall percentage of personal office top staff of color increased from 7.1% up to 11%, but Asian American/Pacific Islander and Native American numbers declined.** Racial diversity increased among Senate personal office top staff who are Latina/o (2.4% to 3.8%) and African American (0.7% to 3.1%) and declined among those who are Asian American/Pacific Islander (3.7% to 2.7%) and Native American (0.3% to 0%).