

November 20, 2020

Senator-elect
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator-elect:

Congratulations on your election to the 117th Congress!

As you prepare to staff your office, we ask you to 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, and administrative director).

As you may know, the Joint Center's August 2020 report, [*Racial Diversity Among Top Staff in Senate Personal Offices*](#), covered in [*The New York Times*](#), revealed that people of color account for 40 percent of the U.S. population, but only 11 percent of top Senate personal office staff in Washington DC offices. African Americans account for 13.4 percent of the U.S. population, but only 3.1 percent of Senate personal office top staffers. Latina/os make up 18.5 percent of the U.S. population, but only 3.8 percent of Senate personal office top staffers. Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans are also significantly underrepresented among personal office top staffers.

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.

In addition, we urge you to take the following steps immediately in preparation for the 117th Congress:

1. ***Adopt a Diversity Plan:*** Develop a written office diversity and inclusion plan that includes recruitment and hiring metrics, staff retention and development strategies, data collection and analysis procedures, a clear allocation of responsibility and performance evaluation for plan implementation, and unconscious bias training for all managerial staff involved in recruitment, hiring, evaluation, and retention.
2. ***Support the Establishment of a Bipartisan Senate Diversity and Inclusion Office to Improve Staff Diversity:*** Just as the U.S. House of Representatives has done, the U.S. Senate should establish a bipartisan Senate Diversity Office that helps Senate offices

recruit, hire, train, develop, and retain a diverse workforce, and collects and discloses disaggregated demographic data of all staff.

3. ***Use the [Brain Trust for a Representative Democracy](#)***: For tips on how to operationalize these and other approaches that can help you build a more diverse and inclusive office, consult the practitioners and experts at Representative Democracy.
4. ***Work With the Tri-Caucus Staff Associations***: In recruiting talent, work with the Congressional Asian Pacific American Staff Association, Congressional Black Associates, Congressional Hispanic Staff Association, and Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus, which maintain databases of strong diverse talent.

In the new Congress, top 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 our entire nation.

Ensuring racial diversity among your top and mid-level staff would enhance the deliberation, innovation, legitimacy, and outcomes of your office and of the chamber as a whole.

You have an opportunity to show that the experiences and skills of all Americans are vital to your work.

We look forward to working with you.

Regards,

African American Mayors Association
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Counseling Association
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
American Society of Association Executives
American Society of Landscape Architects
Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC)
Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)
Association Headquarters
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation
Bipartisan Policy Center

Black Futures Lab
Black Girl Magic (BGM) Network
Black Women's Health Imperative
Chinese American Citizens Alliance/DC
College to Congress
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF)
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)
Congressional Management Foundation
Democracy Fund Voice
Demand Progress
Federally Employed Women
Forge Policy Solutions
Guiding Researchers & Advocates to Scientific Partnerships (GRASP)
Hmong National Development
Inclusive America
Issue One
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
Lawyers' Committee For Civil Rights Under Law
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
MANA, A National Latina Organization
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)
NALEO Educational Fund
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse (NAPAFASA)
National Action Network (NAN)
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)
National Association for the Self-Employed (NASE)
National Bar Association (NBA)
National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC)
National Black Worker Center Project
National Coalition for Asian Pacific Americans Community Development (CAPACD)
National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)
National Court Reporters Association (NCRA)
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Network for Youth
National Urban League (NUL)
National Council of Negro Women (NCNW)
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
National Organization of Black County Officials, Inc. (NOBCO)
Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)

Our Perspective: Asian American Plays
Pay Our Interns
Pride at Work
Project Management Institute
Public Knowledge
South Asian Bar Association of North America
South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship and Training (SAFEST)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative
TESOL International Association
The Almond Group
The Feighan Team
The Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights
The Links, Incorporated
The Raben Group
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
UnidosUS
Washington Government Relations Group (WGRG)
Women in Government Relations (WRG)
Women's Congressional Policy Institute
Women's Congressional Staff Foundation
Women's Global Impact Initiative
Working IDEAL