

November 16, 2022

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

Dear Senator-elect _____:

Congratulations on your election to the 118th 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.

The Joint Center's [tracker of racial diversity of top staff hires in the 117th Congress](#) shows that people of color accounted for 36.7 percent of top staff hired by newly-elected U.S. senators. While freshman senators of the 117th Congress hired a more diverse top staff than the 117th Congress as a whole, their top staff diversity lagged behind the diversity of the U.S. population.

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 immediately take the following steps in preparation for the 118th Congress:

1. ***Adopt a Diversity Plan:*** Develop a written office diversity and inclusion plan that includes recruitment and hiring goals, staff retention and development strategies, data collection and analysis procedures, a clear allocation of responsibility and performance evaluation implementation plan, 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 and Inclusion 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. ***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.
4. ***Engage the Tri-Caucus nonprofit organizations:*** The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI), Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) and Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS), and other organizations similarly focused on diversity in government. Recruiting and/or accepting interns and fellows from their programs, meeting with and speaking to their program participants, and supporting their missions by participating in their events will increase your office's visibility among diverse talent, and continue to build the pipeline of diverse staff.
5. ***Use the resources provided by Representative Democracy:*** For tips on how to operationalize these and other approaches that can help you build a more diverse and inclusive office, visit [here](#).

In the new Congress, top and key mid-level staffers will have significant influence in decisions that affect our entire nation. This includes developing legislation, providing oversight of hundreds of administrative agencies that employ over 3.6 million civilian and military workers, and overseeing a multi-trillion dollar budget and appropriations process.

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

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies & partners (will be listed alphabetically)

1882 Foundation
ABFE

Advancement Project
Advocacy Blueprints
African American Mayors Association
American Counseling Association
American Society of Association Executives
Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC)
Becker Lawyers
Black Men on the Hill (BMH)
Black Voters Matter Fund
Black Women's Congressional Alliance
Black Women's Health Imperative
Chinese American Citizens Alliance DC
Color Of Change
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF)
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)
Congressional Management Foundation
D&P Creative Strategies
Demand Progress Action
Democracy Fund Voice
Diversity in Government Relations Coalition
Inclusive America
Issue One
Japanese American Citizens League
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of Women Voters of the United States
MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund)
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Miller Wenhold Association Management
Miller-Wenhold Capitol Strategies
MOB Advocacy
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)
NALEO Educational Fund
National Action Network
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
National Association of Investment Companies
National Black Justice Coalition
National Black Worker Center
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (CAPACD)
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Institute For Lobbying & Ethics

National Medical Association
National Urban League
Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates
Partnership for Public Service
Pay Our Interns
Pride at Work
Public Knowledge
Representative Democracy
Rulon & White Governance Strategies
Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus
South Asian Fund For Education Scholarship and Training Inc
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Economic and Social Justice
State and Federal Communications, Inc
TESOL International Association
The Almond Group
The Madison Group, LLC
Tiye Hayes Health
TOWER 19
University of California, Riverside
Washington Government Relations Group
Women in Government Relations (WGR)
Women's Congressional Staff Foundation
Working IDEAL