

November 16, 2022

Senator _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Returning U.S. Senators:

Congratulations on your re-election to the 118th Congress!

This is a time of great staff transition, and as you prepare to fill openings in 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).

If you will hold a committee or subcommittee leadership position, we also ask that you prioritize diversity in 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 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 office staff. 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.

Similarly, our July 2021 report, [*Racial Diversity Among Top Staff in Senate Committee Offices*](#), reveals that people of color are underrepresented among staff directors, deputy staff directors, chief counsels, general counsels, and policy directors in Senate committee offices. Only 7.9 percent of Senate staff directors identify as people of color, and only 15.7 percent of all other committee top staff positions (deputy staff director, general counsel, chief counsel, and policy director) identify as people of color.

You have an opportunity to start changing these statistics over the next few months as you hire top staff and mid-level staff for your offices. This is especially true for new Senate committee chairs and ranking members who are also recruiting and hiring their committee staff.

In addition to hiring diverse top and mid-level committee staffers, 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. ***Establish a Bipartisan Senate Diversity and Inclusion Office to Improve Staff Diversity:*** Just as in the House, the Senate Diversity and Inclusion Office should be staffed by professionals with expertise in diversity who support both Democratic and Republican Members in identifying, recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting diverse talent. The Senate Office should also collect demographic data of staff, and analyze, disclose, and disaggregate the data by position and other factors. Further, the Senate Office should help the chamber as a whole, leadership offices, committee offices, and individual Member personal offices devise and implement strategies to improve diversity.
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, click [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.

If you will hold a committee or subcommittee leadership position, ensuring racial diversity among your committee 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