

November 13, 2024

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

Dear Senator-elect \_\_\_\_\_:

Welcome to the 119<sup>th</sup> 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 “pathway” staff (e.g., deputy chiefs of staff, senior advisers, legislative assistants, counsels, and press secretaries/deputy communications directors).*

Hiring a team that reflects the diversity in your state would help you to more effectively serve your constituents. Having a more diverse team has been [shown](#) to increase creativity and innovation, which are important skills for congressional staffers.

Since 2015, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies has analyzed and disseminated information on the state of diversity among congressional staff. The Joint Center’s October 2023 report on diversity among senior staff in the U.S. Senate, covered in [The Hill](#), demonstrates that people of color account for 41.1 percent of the U.S. population, but only 15.8 percent of top Senate personal office staff in Washington, DC offices. Further, June 2024 Joint Center report, [Pathway Staff Diversity in Senate Personal Offices](#), covered in [Politico](#) and [Reuters](#), revealed that while people of color account for 41.1 percent of the U.S. population, they account for only 21.4 percent of pathway staff of color in the personal offices of U.S. senators.

You have an opportunity to start to change these statistics over the next few months as you hire top staff and pathway staff for your offices. The Joint Center is tracking and sharing the hiring patterns for all top staff in congressional offices [here](#).

We urge you to immediately take the following steps in preparation for building a staff to support you in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress:

1. ***Adopt a Diversity Plan:*** Develop a written office diversity and inclusion plan that includes staff retention and development strategies, data collection, and analysis procedures. A [study](#) found that organizations that shared their diversity data with stakeholders allowed them to increase accountability and transparency around issues of diversity. Similarly, the U.S. Congress can share data about their staff diversity to increase accountability and transparency with the American people. Of course, Title VII prohibits basing employment decisions on race or other protected characteristics. Expanding recruitment to diversify the candidate pool and removing barriers to apply are examples of measures that employers can take to diversify staff that bring more candidates into consideration and are lawful.

2. ***Support the Establishment of a Bipartisan Senate Diversity and Inclusion Office to Improve Staff Diversity:*** 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. ***Work With the Tri-Caucus Staff Associations:*** In recruiting talent, work with the [Congressional Asian Pacific American Staff Association \(CAPASA\)](#), [Congressional Black Associates \(CBA\)](#), [Congressional Hispanic Staff Association \(CHSA\)](#), and [Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus \(SBLSC\)](#), which maintain databases of strong diverse talent.
4. ***Engage the Tri-Caucus Nonprofit Organizations:*** The [Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute \(CHCI\)](#), [Congressional Black Caucus Foundation \(CBCF\)](#), [Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies \(APAICS\)](#), and other organizations similarly focused on diversity in government are great resources for member offices. 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.

In the new Congress, top and pathway staffers will significantly influence decisions affecting our nation. This includes developing and building support for legislation, providing oversight of hundreds of administrative agencies that employ over three million civilian and military workers, and overseeing a multi-trillion-dollar budget and appropriations process.

Ensuring racial diversity among your top and pathway staff would enhance the deliberation, innovation, legitimacy, and outcomes of your office and the U.S. Senate.

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)

American Governance Institute  
Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)  
Black Economic Alliance  
Black Futures Lab  
Black to the Future Action Fund  
Black Voters Matter Fund  
Black Women's Congressional Alliance  
Black Women's Health Imperative  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBTQ Centers

Coalition on Human Needs  
Color Of Change  
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)  
D&P Creative Strategies  
Democracy Fund Voice  
Diversity in Government Relations Coalition  
EdTrust  
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities  
Equal Justice Society  
Equality California  
Impact Fund  
Inclusive America  
Issue One  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)  
MANA, A National Latina Organization  
NAACP  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)  
National Action Network  
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)  
National Asian Pacific American Families Allied for Substance Awareness and Harm Reduction  
National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB)  
National Association of Securities Professionals  
National Bankers Association  
National Black Justice Collective  
National Black Worker Center  
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD)  
National Employment Law Project  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Urban League  
National Women's Law Center  
NCAPA (National Council of Asian Pacific Americans)  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
POPVOX Foundation  
Race Forward  
Reflections DEI  
Representative Democracy  
Rulon & White Governance Strategies  
Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus (SBLSC)  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
Springfield Food Policy Council  
State and Federal Communications, Inc.  
State Innovation Exchange (SiX)  
TESOL International Association

The Almond Group  
The Arc of the United States  
The Madison Group, LLC  
The National Institute For Lobbying & Ethics  
The Sikh Coalition  
Third Way  
U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.  
UnidosUS  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Washington Government Relations Group  
Women of Reform Judaism  
Working IDEAL