

Supporters of Diversity Among Top Congressional Staff

December 3, 2018

Members of the 116th Congress
U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

Dear New and Returning Members of Congress:

Congratulations on your election to the 116th Congress. This is a time of great staff transition, and as you prepare to fill openings in your office, we believe that you should establish a culture of diversity and inclusion.

We are writing to ask you to prioritize diversity in your hiring, particularly among your personal office top staff (e.g., chief of staff, legislative director, and communications director) and key mid-level staff (e.g., legislative assistant, counsel, policy advisor, press secretary, administrative director). If you will hold a committee or subcommittee leadership position, we also ask that you prioritize diversity when 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 September 2018 report, [Racial Diversity Among Top U.S. House Staff](#), revealed that people of color accounted for 38 percent of the U.S. population, but only 13.7 percent of top House staff. [The Joint Center's earlier report](#) found that the U.S. Senate was even less diverse, with people of color accounting for only 7.1 percent of top staff.

You have an opportunity to start to change these statistics over the next few months as you hire top staff and key mid-level staff for your offices. This is especially true for newly elected Members who are building an entire personal office staff, House committee Ranking Members who are transitioning to Chairs and are doubling their committee staff, and new committee Chairs and Ranking Members in both chambers who are building their committee staff.

In addition to hiring diverse top and key mid-level staffers, we urge you to take the following steps immediately in preparation for the 116th Congress:

1. **Set Clear Goals:** Promptly develop hiring goals to ensure diversity among those hired in new top and key mid-level staff position openings in your office.
2. **Adopt a Diversity Plan:** Develop a written office diversity and inclusion plan that includes recruitment and hiring goals, retention and development strategies for staff, data collection and analysis procedures, a clear allocation of responsibility among staff and

performance evaluation for implementation of the plan, and unconscious bias training for all managerial staff involved in recruitment, hiring, evaluation, and retention.

3. ***Adopt the Rooney Rule:*** Formally adopt and implement the Rooney Rule, which would require your office to interview at least one person of color for every top and key mid-level staff position opening. Senate Democrats adopted this rule in 2017. Data should be kept to measure the compliance and effectiveness of the rule.
4. ***Support Chamber-Wide or Conference-Wide Efforts to Improve Staff Diversity,*** such as the creation of an independent and bipartisan Diversity Office, the disclosure of demographic data of staff, and adoption of the Rooney Rule.

In the new Congress, top and key mid-level staffers will have significant influence in developing legislation. They also play a critical role in the oversight of hundreds of administrative agencies that employ over three million civilian and military workers and a multi-trillion-dollar budget and appropriations process.

The experiences and skills of all Americans are vital to your work. Ensuring diversity among your staff will enhance the deliberation, innovation, legitimacy, and outcomes of your office and of the chamber as a whole.

We look forward to working with you.

Regards,

1882 Project Foundation
AAPI Progressive Action
Access Now
Americans for Financial Reform and Americans for Financial Reform Education Fund
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
Asian American Action Fund
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Center for American Progress
Chinese American Citizens Alliance
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
D&P Creative Strategies, LLC
Diversity Declaration Steering Group/Diversity Matters
Earthjustice
Ecumenical Poverty Initiative
Equal Pay Today
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality California
Federally Employed Women
Hip Hop Caucus

Hmong American Partnership
Hmong National Development
Human Rights Campaign Impact Fund
Inclusv
Indian American Impact
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)
NALEO Educational Fund
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse (NAPAFASA)
National Action Network
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Association of Social Workers
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
National Council of Negro Women
National Education Association
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
National Medical Malpractice Advocacy Association
National Organization for Women
National Organization of Black County Officials, Inc. (NOBCO)
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
OCA - Greater Houston
Pay Our Interns
People For the American Way
PODER PAC
Pride at Work
Solidarity Strategies
South Asian Bar Association of North America
South Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship and Training (SAFEST)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
UnidosUS
United Methodist General Board of Church and Society
Voices for Progress
Washington Government Relations Group (WGRG)
Women Employed
Working IDEAL