

February 5, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer:

As the Senate Democratic Caucus assumes the majority in the U.S. Senate and plans to address a number of important policy issues, this is a key moment to increase diversity among top and mid-level staff. Just as Speaker Pelosi established a House Office of Diversity and Inclusion when she assumed leadership of her chamber, we are writing to ask that you establish a bipartisan Senate Diversity and Inclusion Office.

The Joint Center's August 2020 report, [*Racial Diversity Among Top Staff in Senate Personal Offices*](#), revealed that people of color account for 40 percent of the U.S. population, but only 11 percent of top Senate personal office staff (chiefs of staff, legislative directors, and communications directors). A forthcoming Joint Center report demonstrates similar racial disparities among full committee Senate top staff.

Among both chambers and parties, your caucus has been a leader in collecting and releasing racial and ethnic data among staff through the Senate Democratic Diversity Initiative. Your willingness to publish this data was a critical first step toward acknowledging and addressing challenges in diversity among congressional staff, and undoubtedly drove some progress among your Members and some of the structural changes in the U.S. House.

Now is the time, however, for the Senate as a whole to make an institutional commitment to diversity and establish a bipartisan Senate Diversity and Inclusion Office.

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 Diversity and Inclusion Office should help the chamber as a whole, leadership offices, committee offices, and individual Member personal offices devise and implement strategies to improve diversity.

Voters have made it clear: the status quo is no longer acceptable when it comes to representation on Capitol Hill. Diversity must be a priority.

Together, we can continue the progress toward ensuring that the Senate is more representative of our nation. We look forward to working with you in establishing a bipartisan Senate Diversity and Inclusion Office.

Regards,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Society of Association Executives
American Society of Landscape Architects
Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation
Black Voters Matter Fund
College to Congress
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)
Demand Progress
Democracy Fund Voice
Forge Policy Solutions
Inclusive America
Issue One
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
MANA, A National Latina Organization
NAACP
NALEO Educational Fund
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
National Action Network (NAN)
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)
National Black Justice Coalition
National Black Worker Center Project
National Council of Negro Women
National Organization of Black County Officials (NOBCO)
National Urban League
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Ohio Society of Association Executives
Ohio Society of CPAs
Pay Our Interns (POI)
Pride at Work
South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship and Training (SAFEST)
TESOL International Association
The Almond Group

The Links, Incorporated
Washington Government Relations Group
Women's Congressional Staff Foundation