NEW REPORT FINDS PEOPLE OF COLOR NEARLY ABSENT FROM TOP STAFF POSITIONS IN U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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WASHINGTON, DC – The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies today released a detailed report on the troubling lack of racial diversity among top staff in the U.S. House of Representatives. The report, titled " Racial Diversity Among Top U.S. House Staff " **found that while people of color account for 3 8 percent of the U.S. population, they make up only 13.7 percent of all top House staff. This demonstrates that the American public is more likely to elect a person of color to the House than House members are to hire top staff of color.**

Beyond members of color, there is little difference between the political caucuses. Of the 329 White members of the House, only 10 Republican members and six Democratic members have chiefs of staff of color. In the personal offices of White Democratic members, only 7.4 percent of top staff are people of color even though, on average, 37.4 percent of these districts' residents are people of color. In the offices of White Republican members, only three percent of top staff are people of color even though these members represent districts that are on average 26 percent people of color.

"The House of Representatives cannot effectively create public policy that benefits all Americans if the people making policy decisions do not look like America," said Spencer Overton, President of the Joint Center. "While these numbers are disappointing, this report is a critical step toward understanding and addressing this lack of diversity and inclusion in Congress. Members of Congress must take action to recruit and hire talented diverse candidates for senior staff positions to ensure that it better understands and more effectively represents all Americans."

Other key statistics from the report include:

- Almost a three-quarters of House Members—313 members—have no top staff of color;

- Over a quarter of members—114 members—represent districts that are over a third people of color but do not have any top staff of color;

- Much of the Democrats' staff diversity comes from the Congressional Black Caucus. While **53 percent of Congressional Black Caucus members' top staffers are Black, only 2 percent of White Democratic members' top staffers are Black;**

- Almost 40 percent of the Democratic Congressional Hispanic Caucus members and half of the Republican Congressional Hispanic Conference members have no Latino top staff;
- There are no Latinos, Asian American Pacific Islanders, or Native Americans in any

of the 40 committee staff director positions or in any of the 24 top staff positions in the four top leadership offices of Democrats and Republicans; and

- **Women account for almost 61 percent of Black top staffers, almost 45 percent of Latina/o top staffers, and just over 31 percent of AAPI top staffers.**

For purposes of the report, top staff are defined to include chiefs of staff, legislative directors, and communications directors in Washington, DC personal offices of U.S. House members; chiefs of staff, policy directors, and communication directors in the top four leadership offices of each political party; and staff directors assigned to full committees. The figures reflect House employment as of June 1, 2018.

“These findings demonstrate a profound and appalling lack of diversity and inclusion in what is supposed to be our most representative branch of government,” said Don Bell, Director of the Joint Center Black Talent Initiative. “It is clear that there is an urgent need for action. The People’s House cannot claim to be truly representative of the nation it serves without an immediate move to increase transparency and adopt a comprehensive bipartisan plan to address the lack of diversity and inclusion in the chamber.”

In 2015, the Joint Center issued a similar report, *Diversity Among Top Senate Staff , finding that people of color accounted for only 7.1 percent of top Senate staffers. As a result, Senate Democrats released a first-of-its-kind report providing demographic data on the racial diversity of members’ offices to help identify the problem and track progress.*

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