



April 8, 2024

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
H-204, the Capitol
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joseph Morelle
Ranking Member
Committee on House
Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Jeffries and Ranking Members Morelle and DeLauro:

As Chairs of the Congressional Tri-Caucus – composed of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus – and on behalf of the diverse constituencies we represent, we write to you about restoring the independence of House Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) in future Congresses, and robustly strengthening and supporting its mission and work.

Congress works best when its workforce truly reflects the diversity of our nation. The ODI, a non-partisan and non-legislative support office, was established in the 116th Congress and was charged with helping to address the state of underrepresentation through a mission to create and cultivate a congressional workforce that is reflective of the American people. Since its inception, the ODI has assisted approximately 2,678 jobseekers and conducted over 1,526 consultations with employing offices. The office has referred over 6,441 resumes for consideration to hiring managers and helped approximately 730 jobseekers to land congressional careers. Further, ODI's research initiatives and surveys shed critical light on the state of workforce representation, compensation, benefits, and demographic makeup of the U.S. House of Representatives workforce. A 2022 ODI study on barrier analysis showed that when compared to external benchmarks, 64% of House jobs have disproportionately fewer Black staffers, 58% have disproportionately fewer Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish staffers, and 57% have disproportionately fewer Asian American staffers.¹ A 2022 study by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies also found wide disparities in representation among senior staff, as only 18% of director-level positions in the House were held by people of color, despite making up over 40% of the nation's population.²

¹ <https://diversity.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2022-ODI-Barrier-Analysis.pdf>

² <https://jointcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Racial-Diversity-Among-Top-Staff-in-the-U.S-House-of-Representatives.pdf>

ODI's work has helped tremendously to improve the congressional workplace through its mission and work in Member services, research and data analytics, and professional development for all Congressional staff. Despite ODI's record of service, Republican lawmakers are so eager to score political points by eliminating all diversity and inclusion programs that they undercut a non-partisan office that dozens of their own Members have used to identify highly qualified candidates that they went on to hire. At the beginning of the 118th Congress, former Speaker Kevin McCarthy issued a directive to eliminate the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

In the face of Republican extremism, we are incredibly grateful for your unrelenting leadership in fighting against their assaults on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and supporting ODI during negotiations of this past appropriations package. We were relieved to see in the Fiscal Year 2024 Legislative Branch Appropriations that non-partisan staff and critical functions of ODI were ultimately protected and were moved to be housed under the Chief Administrative Officer.

At the same time, we know the ODI operated at its best when it was fully dedicated to advancing equity for our Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Black, and Hispanic communities, along with other underserved communities, including women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. We therefore stand ready to work with House Democratic Leadership and future Committee Chairs to restore the existence and robust funding of the House Office of Diversity and Inclusion in the 119th Congress and beyond. House Democrats have a critical opportunity to strengthen equity for communities of color in how they are represented in the governing bodies of our nation. The American people are best served when Members of Congress—as well as their staff—reflect the great diversity of our country.

We thank you for your attention, and we look forward to our continued work together to ensure that the needs of communities of color are met.

Sincerely,



Judy Chu
Chair, Congressional Asian
Pacific American Caucus



Steven Horsford
Chair, Congressional
Black Caucus



Nanette Barragán
Chair, Congressional
Hispanic Caucus

cc: The Honorable Adriano Espaillat
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515