

Vice President Biden's Transition Team Co-Chairs:

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Dear Transition Team Co-Chairs,

The people you appoint to lead your transition and administration will face enormous challenges. They must lead the [ambitious response you have laid out](#) for responding to a global health and economic catastrophe layered onto an economy already failing to deliver financial security to the majority of Americans, especially for historically disadvantaged communities. And they must do so while rebuilding government capacities devastated by the Trump administration. We, therefore, urge you to apply two important principles as you appoint personnel to your transition and administration. First, you should build upon President Obama's efforts to strengthen the diversity of the federal workforce. Second, you should appoint only individuals who have a strong track record of standing up to corporate power and whose commitment to public service is unimpeachable.

A diverse country needs a diverse political and governing workforce. The federal government is best able to overcome common challenges when they empower diverse voices and leverage the talents of those from all segments of our society. That is why both President Obama and Secretary Clinton began building diverse administrations long before Election Day. Starting during the transition process, President Obama assembled the [most diverse](#) administration in history: for the first time, women and members of underrepresented communities held the majority of top policy appointments. Secretary Clinton also committed to nominating a [majority-female Cabinet](#) and recruited many diverse candidates to her presidential transition team.

The next administration must similarly embrace diversity in all its forms. It must be built by individuals who bring unique perspectives to government due to their race, ethnicity, gender, disability, geographic background, age, national origin, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. It must identify, recruit, and welcome individuals whose background and experiences leave them better-prepared to serve a broad range of communities.

We urge your transition and administration to make ambitious diversity hiring commitments to achieve this important goal. Your administration should commit that at least half of all appointees be women, people of color, or members of underrepresented communities. Your administration should also make a concerted effort to look outside the beltway for individuals whose experiences will bring unique perspectives and skills to federal service. This includes proactively seeking the input of groups that traditionally lack access to recommend qualified individuals. While all appointees must have experience that qualifies them for the positions they hold, non-traditional experience or credentials should be considered to expand the pool of possible candidates.

The social, economic, and national security challenges this country faces demand that the next administration govern for the people—and remain fiercely independent from the influence of monopolistic corporations and financial interests. And personnel decisions must reflect this imperative as well. This includes, of course, guarding against the type of open corruption and cronyism rampant in the Trump administration. But individuals in a future Biden administration must also have the ability to understand and overcome the traditional, pro-corporate and pro-Wall Street ideological constraints on many policymakers' imaginations that are partly to blame for today's crisis of concentrated corporate power. They will need to demonstrate the courage to learn and to act boldly to challenge powerful corporate and financial interests whenever they are in conflict with economic and racial justice or national security.

In light of growing evidence that corporate concentration and financialization are at the root of some of our most pernicious national challenges, they must understand and be unafraid to reassert essential policy tools—like aggressive investigatory agendas, robust antitrust enforcement, strong anti-corruption rules on corporate money in politics and revolving-door influence, reshaped international trade arrangements, effective action against Wall Street profiteering, and a reinvigorated regulatory agenda—to challenge corporations' dominance over our economy and democracy.

Thus, in addition to establishing strong diversity goals, we urge you to establish hiring criteria that ensure every presidential appointee demonstrates a sincere and proven dedication to the public interest. Specifically, we urge you to appoint to your transition and administration only policymakers who have stood up to power and are fiercely independent from Wall Street and corporate monopolies. We urge you to reject policymakers who have held senior roles in the industries they will be tasked with regulating; who have worked as corporate lobbyists, whether registered or not; who have used public service for personal gain; or who have otherwise, through their affiliations or sympathies with abusive or extractive institutions and corporations, promoted interests at odds with the well-being of workers, consumers, people of color, the environment, small businesses, and communities as a whole. Individuals with experience leading small and independent businesses should be welcomed into any administration; but those who have chosen to advance the interests of abusive or extractive firms like Amazon, Facebook, and Blackstone should not.

Finally, we urge your transition team to adopt [strong transparency rules](#), building off the transparency and ethics measures adopted by the Obama-Biden presidential transition team. The transition should name all individuals working on and supporting the team, both paid or unpaid, and make all of this information readily available and publicly accessible.

We recognize that these criteria may disqualify many individuals from receiving presidential appointments. But corporate interests or those whose experience or sympathies are likely to result in regulatory capture are already over-represented in government. This is especially true during the transition period, when hundreds of individuals from regulated industries are historically appointed or nominated to key roles. There are countless qualified individuals with different backgrounds, including thousands of women and people of color. Seeking out these new, dedicated, diverse, and independent appointees will demonstrate your commitment to rebuilding an economy that works for all.

Sincerely,

American Economic Liberties Project
Americans for Financial Reform
Athena
Center for Popular Democracy
Community Change
Community Change Action
Data for Progress
Debt Collective
Demand Justice
Demand Progress
Demos Action
Economic Security Project
Faith in Action
Fight Corporate Monopolies
Food & Water Watch
Friends of the Earth
Income Movement
Insight Center for Community Economic Development
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Liberation in a Generation
Main Street Alliance
National Partnership for Working Families Action
One Fair Wage
Open Markets Institute
Private Equity Stakeholder Project
Progressive Campaign Change Committee
Public Citizen
Revolving Door Project
Small Business Majority
Social Security Works
Strong Economy for All
Sunrise Movement
Tax March
The Justice Collaborative
Ultraviolet
United For Respect
Working Families Party