



STAFF UP CONGRESS ANNOUNCES CAREER PLACEMENTS FOR FIRST CLASS OF LEGISLATIVE ACADEMY PARTICIPANTS

Initiative has helped 10 participants advance to top Hill staff positions, increasing the number of staffers of color who currently serve in senior staff positions in Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Staff Up Congress, a national initiative by NALEO Educational Fund and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies to help increase the amount of people of color in senior staff positions on the Hill, has announced the career advancements for their first class of legislative academy participants. Since the fall academy concluded, 10 participants have been hired in director positions for members of Congress.

Staff Up Congress Legislative Academy participants engaged in a four-week program this past fall that helped provide them with the tools necessary to hold senior legislative positions on the Hill. Industry experts and current and former Senate and House staff helped participants to further develop their skills on issues ranging from the appropriations process to bipartisan cooperation.

“Through the Staff Up Congress initiative, we are making great progress ensuring that the senior staff assisting our lawmakers reflect an increasingly diverse America,” said Arturo Vargas, CEO of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund. “We are proud of this new class of talented directors, who will put their extensive expertise and experience to work helping Congress move our nation forward.”

Career advancements include:

- **Imani Augustus, Legislative Director, Rep. Dean Phillips (D-MA)**
- **Tyrone Bratton, Legislative Director, Rep. Elaine Luria (D-VA)**
- **Emilio Mendez, Legislative Director, Rep. Lou Correa (D-CA)**
- **Jacqueline Sanchez, Legislative Director, Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-TX)**
- **Dao Nguyen, Executive Director, Future Forum (Chair, Rep. Murphy)**
- **Eliza Ramirez, Legislative Director, Rep. Tom Malinowski (D-NJ)**
- **Roberto Sada, Legislative Director, Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ)**
- **Don Andres, Legislative Director, Rep. Jesus Garcia (D-IL)**

- **Samuel Negatu, Legislative Director, Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA)**
- **Stephanie Cuevas, Legislative Director, Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-CA)**

People of color remain extremely underrepresented among senior Hill staffers. A 2018 study by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that only 13.7 percent of senior House staffers and 7.1 percent of senior Senate staffers are people of color. One of the key reasons for this disparity is the small pool of qualified candidates of color for these positions. Staff Up Congress, which was launched in November 2017, hopes that this first class of Legislative Academy participants will help address this problem.

In addition to the Legislative Academy, Staff Up is also planning to launch a Communications and Senior Management Academy to help participants pursue jobs as communications directors and chiefs of staff.

###

About NALEO Educational Fund

NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading non-profit, non-partisan organization that facilitates full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.

About the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is a non-partisan, non-profit public policy organization that supports elected officials and policy experts who serve communities of color across the country.