



January 26, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

**Re: Civil Rights Support for Racial Diversity Among Tech Policy Leadership and  
Geoffrey Starks as FCC Chair**

Dear President Biden:

Congratulations on your successful inauguration. As civil rights organizations, we were proud to see democracy at work just two weeks after violent insurrectionists with confederate paraphernalia stormed the halls of our most valued institutions in an attempt to effectively disqualify the votes of millions of Black people.

As we have indicated to your transition team in a myriad of ways, as the newly elected President of the United States in the most consequential time in modern history, you are tasked with ensuring that our most marginalized are seen, heard, and represented in your Administration's appointments. In particular, we continue to see the ways technology can be used to oppress certain communities and empower others.

**This is why we strongly encourage you to ensure that the technology sector's "Big Four"—U.S. Chief Technology Officer, Federal Trade Commission Chair, Federal Communications Commission Chair, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy Director—include significant racial diversity.** These appointments drive policy results that will shape the future of the communities we represent for decades to come. Achieving representation among these leadership positions is a top priority for us.

Access to affordable broadband, algorithmic bias, consumer data privacy, government surveillance, and disinformation are all technology issues that adversely affect communities of color and low-income communities. Our nation's ability to enact inclusive technology policies rests with you appointing at least some leaders among the Big Four who prioritize an agenda that reflects the needs of Black, Latino, and Indigenous communities. This is why we implore you to

permanently appoint individuals who have demonstrated their commitment to people of color through not only their words, but also their actions.

**We recently communicated to your team our unwavering support for Commissioner Geoffrey Starks to be appointed Chair of the Federal Communications Commission, and this remains our top priority.** Commissioner Starks works to make certain that Americans—especially people of color and low-income communities—have access to affordable, reliable broadband. We have worked alongside the Commissioner on this issue, and he has been the strongest voice and has continuously ensured that organizations like ours have a seat at the table so that our policy recommendations are fairly considered. We trust his leadership on the equitable distribution of communications services because he centers the country’s most marginalized communities in all of his work. At this moment in history, we know that Commissioner Starks is the right choice to lead the FCC in its mandate of closing the digital divide.

As civil rights leaders, we can no longer afford failed promises and dreams deferred. Now more than ever, we need racially-diverse federal appointments that lead and set the agenda at federal agencies that regulate the technology sector.

Very truly yours,

Rashad Robinson  
President  
Color of Change

Derrick Johnson  
President & CEO  
NAACP

Rev. Al Sharpton  
President and Founder  
National Action Network

Oleta Fitzgerald  
Regional Administrator  
Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative

David J. Johns  
Executive Director  
National Black Justice Coalition

Spencer Overton  
President  
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Alejandro Roark  
Executive Director  
Hispanic Technology &  
Telecommunications Partnership

Dr. Charles Steele, Jr.  
President/CEO  
Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

Stephanie Mash Sykes  
Founding Executive Director  
and General Counsel  
African American Mayors Association