

**Written Testimony before the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress
United States House of Representatives**

“Cultivating Diversity and Improving Retention Among Congressional Staff”

June 20, 2019

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Chairman Kilmer, Vice Chairman Graves, other members of the Select Committee, good afternoon. Thank you for inviting me to testify at this hearing on cultivating diversity and improving retention among Congressional staff. I appreciate the Select Committee’s attention to this matter and recognize how important attracting and retaining staff is to each of you, your colleagues, and the people you represent. I am honored to have this opportunity to share with you Deloitte’s experience in fostering an inclusive culture.

My name is Kwasi Mitchell and I am a principal in Deloitte’s Consulting and Government and Public Services Practice with over 15 years of consulting experience. I specifically focus on supporting security and law enforcement executives through strategic transformations to address emerging security threats. Throughout my career, I have been passionate about mentoring and developing the next generation of diverse leaders. Currently, I serve as the Chief Inclusion Officer for Deloitte Consulting and have championed recruiting diverse talent through Deloitte’s first ever Inclusion Hiring Blitz. For me, inclusion is something that I prioritize every day with my teams and my clients. It’s one of the reasons that I’ve stayed at Deloitte, because it is truly a part of who we are.

At Deloitte, we think of diversity as the different skills, backgrounds, attributes, and perspectives that we each bring to the table. For example, I am one of nine siblings that was raised in a family of factory workers. I was the first in my family to obtain a PhD and become a Principal at a global professional services firm. Ultimately, these aspects are substantially more complex than the descriptor African American male. Our employees are similar, with different roles, hobbies, and affiliations that shape who they are and how they see the world. Inclusion is leveraging all of those different things that makes each person unique in a way that encourages them to be authentic and know they are valued.

To understand why we are so dedicated to fostering inclusion, let me briefly share with you more about our organization and our workforce. In the Deloitte US firm, we employ over 100,000+ professionals working across 20 industry sectors. Our people provide industry-leading audit & assurance, consulting, tax, risk and financial advisory services to clients.

As a professional services organization, our business is built on the knowledge and unique perspectives of our people. Deloitte's inclusive culture is critical to our business: it enables us to leverage all that makes us each who we are to deliver the most valuable perspectives to our clients and the most engaging experiences for our colleagues. We do this by fostering an inclusive culture, where our people feel that they can connect, belong, and grow.

Inclusion is foundational to our culture and core values. Deloitte has been shaping corporate America's inclusion landscape since 1993, when we became the first professional services organization to establish women's and diversity initiatives. Over the nearly three decades since then, we haven't slowed down. While much has changed over the years, a few things have remained constant: leadership commitment, continuous evolution, and an innovative approach to fostering an inclusive culture. We have set the standard by being an organization of firsts: the first minority CEO of the Big Four, first woman CEO of the Big Four, the first minority chairman, first woman chairman, and first woman CEO of a consulting organization of its size. This is a result of our continued commitment to developing and advancing talent from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.

From our dedication and holding ourselves accountable, we have seen the results: for over the past five years, 50%+ of our new Partners, Principals, and Managing Directors are women and/or minorities. Today, two-thirds of our professionals in the US are women and minorities. Additionally, over 90% of our people said they are proud to be part of Deloitte on our talent survey, and they cited our inclusive culture as one of the top reasons.

What we do which is applicable to your efforts begins with how we recruit. From the moment that our professionals first interact with one of our recruiters or are exposed to our brand, to when they walk in the door, network with their colleagues, and develop new skills, our goal is for everyone to experience and thrive in our inclusive culture. Inclusion impacts their experience every day and is embedded throughout the talent lifecycle – from recruiting, to retention, and advancement.

As a professional services organization, our business is our people. Recruiting is a top priority for us. We know that teams with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to generate creative solutions for our clients' most complex challenges and we apply that concept in our inclusion recruiting teams as well. Deloitte actively seeks candidates from traditional and non-traditional sources, including populations that have been traditionally underrepresented in our industry. Over time, as we get to know potential recruits—through on-campus events, internships in our offices, by doing community service projects with them—we'll get a sense of

their values, their passion for serving others and the way they present themselves and their knowledge. Through these programs, we are able to assess whether they thrive in a team environment, have a keen interest in learning, and enjoy networking. For example, during one weekend in January, we hosted three signature advanced degree inclusion conferences at Deloitte University tailored towards certain groups, some of which are underrepresented in our industry. Each program focused on empowering participants to discover their intrinsic qualities, to learn how to better leverage their strengths, and ultimately, to lead authentically in business school and beyond. Our leaders also participated in these events, sharing their experience and guidance on how they have developed their careers at Deloitte.

We also collaborate with a number of other organizations and professional associations that share our commitment to a diverse workforce and inclusive culture. These relationships help us better connect with the talent we need to serve our clients.

Inclusion also remains key to engagement and retention. One essential aspect of this is our culture of Empowered Well-being. This is Deloitte's holistic approach that gives our people the support and flexibility to make daily choices that enable them to be energized, confident, and aware. This includes benefits, flexibility options, and information about their health.

We also have a market-leading approach to engaging and connecting our people called Inclusion Councils. Inclusion Councils are local office groups that bring together people from different parts of our business, backgrounds, and experiences. They engage in activities and events related to inclusion, wellbeing, development, and community involvement. By encouraging our people to connect across communities and around common interests, Inclusion Councils help our people discover common ground and strengthen support for one another. Inclusion Councils can also help our people connect with other groups in their office or elsewhere in the organization, such as business resource groups, athletic teams, etc. The result has been a vibrant dialogue that has enabled our professionals to learn more about one another, be exposed to new experiences and ways of thinking, and share practices on building an Inclusive culture on a daily basis.

We are proud of our multi-pronged approach to consistently embedding inclusion at key moments throughout our professionals' career journeys. From onboarding programs, to new promotion programming, to establishing inclusive behavior as an aspect of performance management, we will continually seek new and creative ways to raise levels of awareness and accountability for fostering in inclusive culture. A large component of this is demonstrating that inclusion is a key competency for effective leadership. At Deloitte, being a leader, by definition, means being an inclusive leader. All of our people are expected to exemplify inclusive behaviors in their daily interactions.

Mentorship and sponsorship are also key aspects to our culture. I consider myself incredibly fortunate. During my first two weeks at Deloitte, I met a mentor who, after one conversation, told me that he knew that I would do well here and was invested in helping me succeed. It was so important for me to find that support, especially early on. Throughout my career, I've tried to pass on that support that I received to those around me. I had one professional who I met through my involvement at an inclusion advisory committee. I thought she had a great perspective and tried to give her a platform to have exposure to national leadership. Throughout her career transitions, I have tried to encourage her to take risks and try new things. I was incredibly proud last year when she was promoted to managing director. It was great for her, but also for our organization that we had developed and recognized such a talented leader.

Another way that we develop our people as well as advance our inclusive culture is raising awareness around unconscious biases, which are unconscious prejudices or judgements in favor or against a person or group. For different levels in our organization, we have developed programs that explore how leaders and professionals can personally advance our inclusive culture. Focused on awareness, reflection, and personal action, these conversations help develop a robust understanding and tools to mitigate unconscious bias.

These conversations are important to us because they showcase that inclusion is about every day actions. From our research we have developed six inclusive behaviors (or the six Cs) empower all our people with actionable steps on how they can personalize, identify, model, and advance inclusion:

- **Commitment:** Treat everyone with fairness and respect, foster environments where team members can be themselves by modelling authenticity and empower each other's well-being.
- **Courage:** Engage in respectful, but tough conversations when necessary. Identify opportunities to be more inclusive, take ownership and engage others.
- **Cognizance of bias:** Be aware of unconscious biases so decisions can be made in a transparent, consistent, and informed manner.
- **Curiosity:** Listen attentively and value the viewpoints of others.
- **Cultural intelligence:** Seek out opportunities to experience, learn about different cultures, and be aware of other cultural contexts.
- **Collaboration:** Create teams that are diverse in thinking.

These behaviors showcase how every person has an opportunity to participate in and benefit from our inclusive culture. When I talk to clients, I share with them that the most successful organizations are those that have truly embedded inclusion into the fabric of their organization. Providing expectations, defining what inclusive behavior looks like, and holding themselves and their leaders accountable are key to advancing inclusion today.

Another trend that is critical to take into account for approaching diversity and inclusion is an acknowledgement of multidimensionality. As I spoke about earlier, at Deloitte, we believe that everyone has multiple identities that intersect in unique ways. Each of our professionals are more than what meets the eye with diverse and complex experiences, backgrounds, passions, and interests. It's important to acknowledge the complex identities that everyone brings to the table so people feel like they can be their true, authentic selves at work without having to cover or feel that they have to choose any aspect of who they are.

Many of the trends and approaches that I have described are broadly applicable to cultivating diversity and improving retention across many organizations. I would like to end this discussion on an area that is particularly relevant to Congress. We find that more and more that strong inclusive cultures also include an element of purpose and dedication to the greater good. In fact, purpose-driven work is one of the top factors that today's workforce is seeking. Few organizations have as strong a purpose as that of Congress, and it is an outstanding foundation for the continuation and scaling of your diversity and inclusion efforts.

It is important to note that when it comes to diversity and inclusion, there is no one-size-fits-all model that will work for all organizations. Much like each of your offices and the districts you represent, every organization has unique characteristics that must be taken into account. However, venues like today's hearing, where best practices can be shared, are invaluable to advancing the goal of diversity and inclusion.

Thank you again Chairman Kilmer and Vice Chairman Graves for providing me this opportunity to share with the Select Committee Deloitte's perspectives on diversity and inclusion. I look forward to answering any questions you or the other members have at this time.