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December 17, 2015

The Honorable Jenny R. Yang
Chair
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
131 M Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20507

Dear Chair Yang:

As Ranking Member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce with jurisdiction over the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the lead federal agency to enforce laws that ban employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, and genetic information, I write to request that the Commission use its statutory authority to conduct a field hearing and analysis of the race and gender representation in the computer and informational technical field in Silicon Valley. I also ask that the Commission prepare a comprehensive report that analyzes these diversity levels more broadly in the United States' computer technology field.

Media reports have highlighted the abysmally low levels of diversity in companies like Google, Microsoft, Facebook, and others. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that information technology will continue to be one of the fastest-growing sectors of the U.S. economy, adding nearly 1.4 million jobs by 2020. Although computer and informational technology jobs are among the fastest growing in the Nation and command high salaries, African Americans and Hispanics workers are scarce in Silicon Valley. According to the Census Bureau, millennials are more diverse than the generations that preceded them, with 44.2% being part of a minority race or ethnic group. Among the youngest Americans, those under 5 years old, 50.2% are people of color. Companies like Google recently disclosed that their staff is only 3% Hispanic and 2% African American. Yahoo and Facebook, each, report that their staffs are 4% Hispanic and 2% African American.

An analysis by the National Center for Women and Information Technology found that in 2014, 26% of the computing workforce is female, of which 3% are African American women, 5% are Asian American women, and 1% are Hispanic. In major firms like Google, Facebook, Apple, and other big technology companies, men outnumber women 4 to 1. In addition, women are leaving these professions despite majoring in related degrees in their post-secondary studies. In

2008, a Harvard Business Review study found that almost half of women who work in science, engineering, and computer technology will leave the field because of hostile work environments. An updated study in 2014 found that women were continuing to leave these fields because of the “hostile male culture, a sense of isolation, and lack of a clear career path.”

Similarly, Twitter engineering manager Leslie Miley – the only African American in a leadership position at that company – publicly announced that he left the company because of the way Twitter addresses diversity and inclusion. Mr. Miley’s perspective has been echoed by others in the field like Erika Baker, who has blogged about the lack of diversity in the workplace environment, pay disparity, and the overall culture of the technology sector.

The apparent lack of diversity, coupled with the personal anecdotes of women and people of color in the technology field, leads me to request the EEOC to investigate the recruitment, hiring, salaries, and retention programs of Silicon Valley firms – as it is the symbolic bedrock of the Nation’s computer technology sector. Given the size, prestige, and influence of Silicon Valley, I am concerned by the paucity of diversity and the reports of hostile and indifferent work climates that may lead to the loss of the few diverse workers currently employed in the field.

Furthermore, as part of its mandate under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the EEOC is charged with producing periodic reports from public and private employers, and from unions and labor organizations, which indicate the composition of their workforces by sex and race or ethnic category. Key among these reports is the EEO-1, which is collected annually from private employers with 100 or more employees or federal contractors with 50 more employees. To that end, I am requesting that the EEOC examine the Nation’s computer technology industry with respect to the employment of women, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and Native Americans/Alaskan Natives. In particular, I ask that the EEOC analyze the hiring and promotion processes, as well as the employment data of managers and any proactive programs that are designed to anticipate and remove potentially discriminatory practices from the workplace. In the past, the EEOC produced reports examining diversity in law firms (2003); the media (2004); and the finance industry (2006). It is my hope that EEOC can produce a similarly comprehensive product relating to the computer technology sector.

I thank you for your consideration of these two requests and look forward to a robust analysis of Silicon Valley and the computer and informational technology sector nationally.

Sincerely,



ROBERT C. “BOBBY” SCOTT
Ranking Member