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December 17, 2015

Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

As the U.S. workforce has become increasingly diverse, many private and public-sector organizations have recognized the importance of recruiting and retaining minorities and women for key positions to improve their business or organizational performance. Studies have associated a diversity of perspectives in organizations with innovation, and businesses have identified other advantages to having a diverse workforce, such as improving access to talent and better reflecting consumer interests. A December 2013 report from the Harvard Business Review found that when diversity in leadership is correlated with market outcomes, "employees at these companies are 45% likelier to report that their firm's market share grew over the previous year and 70% likelier to report that the firm captured a new market."

The technology industry in the United States is a critical part of the nation's economy, advancing e-commerce, mobile communications, and medical research, and is poised to remain a significant driver of the economy for years to come. According to the 2015 Cyberstates report which provides a state-by-state analysis of the size and scope of the technology industry and its workforce using Bureau of Labor Statistics and other data sources, the technology industry added 129,600 net jobs between 2013 and 2014, for a total of nearly 6.5 million jobs in the Nation. The leading tech industry employment state in 2014 were California (1.1 million), Texas (581,200), New York (346,500), Florida (307,100), and Massachusetts (286,300) in 2014 – with the highest concentration of technology workers employed in Massachusetts (9.8%), Virginia (9.4%), Colorado (9.2%), Maryland (8.6%), and Colorado (8.4%).

Numerous Federal agencies have contracts with companies in the technology sector, including technology manufacturing, telecommunications and internet services, software products, IT services, and research and development and engineering services. The Department of Education administers a number of grant programs to improve diversity in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Yet, recently several major technology companies released statistics detailing their gender, racial, and ethnic diversity for the first time, which

revealed low levels of diversity among the workforce and senior management at these companies. 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. 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.

Accordingly, I request that GAO answer the following questions:

- (1) What have been the trends over the past ten years in racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the workforces at the leading U.S. technology companies, including those that have contracts with the federal government?
- (2) What is known about the effectiveness of key federal programs which aim to improve diversity in the STEM fields?

I thank you for your consideration of this request. Should you require additional information or have questions regarding this request, please contact Véronique Pluviose with the House Committee on Education and the Workforce at veronique.pluviose@mail.house.gov or at (202) 226-9401.

Sincerely,



ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
Ranking Member