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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

February 23, 2018

Jonathan Nash  
Acting CEO  
Millennium Challenge Corporation  
1099 14th Street NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20005-3550

Dear Mr. Nash:

As part of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's oversight responsibilities, I have been reviewing the current nominee for the position of Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), Sean Cairncross. As part of this review process, it has come to my attention that a current member of MCC's senior political leadership has made a number of concerning statements and remarks to staff that call into question the MCC's commitment to an open and diverse workplace and an acceptable code of conduct.

While I will certainly require Mr. Cairncross's commitment to address any workplace issues as part of his nomination process, I write today to voice my concern about the current MCC environment and ask for clarification as to what the organization's leadership is doing to address serious concerns.

MCC's Vice President of Compact Operations, Robert Blau, has reportedly made inappropriate statements to staff that, if not already the subject of review by MCC leadership, warrant further attention. It is my understanding that, among other things, Mr. Blau has inquired about certain employees' ethnic backgrounds, with an apparent focus on minorities, and expressed his discomfort with promoting diversity, especially LGBTQ month.

Further, in reviewing material for Mr. Cairncross's nomination, my staff came across a town hall Mr. Blau held with staff last June that reinforces these concerning allegations. In the video, a transcript of which is attached to this letter, Mr. Blau made a number of troubling comments that raise questions about his approach to and treatment of employees based on their political leanings, sexual orientation, and national origin.

For example, Mr. Blau repeatedly stressed that he is "a partisan," attacked certain media outlets for being "out to get Trump every day" and for trying "to frame the news today to make the president look bad," and, referring to an event with an LGBTQ speaker, remarked, "I'm not someone who celebrates diversity, or engineers it, to me diversity just happens." Mr. Blau also told employees that "I might be curious about where you come from, what your bloodlines are, like intellectually curious," and then singled out an employee because of her surname, stating, "Your demographic is Asian. Are Asians all in one box?"

Given these statements and comments, I write to seek a full accounting of this behavior and MCC's response to it, as well as a commitment from MCC leadership that individuals who engage in such behavior will be held accountable. To that end, I request that you promptly brief my staff on MCC's current workplace policies, the steps taken to address such behavior, as well as the following:

1. Is MCC leadership aware of Mr. Blau's inappropriate comments to employees? Do they comport with MCC's workplace policies?
2. Have any employees filed complaints against Mr. Blau? If so, how many, and what are the nature of those complaints?
3. What steps has MCC taken to address Mr. Blau's behavior, or any similar conduct by other employees, and ensure that such conduct is not tolerated in the future?

As a strong supporter of the MCC and its mission, and longtime advocate for diversity and tolerance as principles to be championed in the workplace and in our national security agencies, I am deeply troubled by Mr. Blau's comments, as well as the prospect that he may have continued to make such comments, or worse, in the eight months that have passed since the video was recorded. I look forward to your commitment to ensuring that MCC's skilled and dedicated employees can work in an environment of respect, inclusion, and dignity.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your response by March 2nd, 2018.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
Ranking Member

CC:  
Melinda Stell  
Director  
Presidential Personnel Office  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20502