

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 13, 2020

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy:

We write to address the decorum among some of your Members and candidates toward women Members of Congress and urge you to set a strong example for appropriate behavior by condemning remarks that are contrary to our values.

Most recently, a candidate for Georgia's 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional District called the Speaker of the House a "b\*\*\*\*," and Congressman Ted Yoho referred to Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez as "disgusting" and a "f\*\*\*\*\* b\*\*\*\*." These misogynistic slurs disgrace the office each of us hold, and send a powerful message to women and girls that there are still those who will seek to cut them down not by challenging the substance of their ideas, but with vile personal attacks rooted in a history of violence and exclusion of women.

For all the gains made in recent years, women continue to represent only 24 percent of Congress. As you know all too well, very few Republican women serve in Congress. It is incumbent on all of us to make sure decorum is maintained by Members and candidates alike and that women are not subject to these hateful slights.

As we celebrate the centennial of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment recognizing women's right to vote, you may be surprised to learn that the word "b\*\*\*\*" was popularized during the suffrage movement to denigrate and diminish women. In fact, between 1915 and 1930, the use of the word "b\*\*\*\*" more than doubled in newspapers and literature.

As we commemorate women's suffrage, let's not forget how much farther we have to go to achieve women's equality with regard to paycheck fairness, pregnancy discrimination, freedom from violence, and women's leadership and representation.

We must hold ourselves to the high standard expected by our constituents. That starts with you condemning, in no uncertain terms, these and other comments that use misogynistic slurs and seek to debase women.

We appreciate your attention to this urgent matter and await your prompt response.

Sincerely,



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Jackie Speier  
Co-Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



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Lois Frankel  
Co-Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



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Brenda L. Lawrence  
Co-Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



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Veronica Escobar  
Vice Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



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Deb Haaland  
Vice Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus