



# SOCIAL ACTION WORKTOOL

**A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities**

Prepared by the Social Action Commission (SAC) | Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



# DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

*A Service Sorority Founded in 1913*

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Greetings Sorors:

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. began its work in social activism when our beloved Founders participated in their first public service act, the Women's Suffrage March on March 3, 1913. For over 106 years, we have been upholding the legacy of our Founders and continue our work through the National Social Action Commission addressing issues that impact public policy and social justice. Social action is the vehicle used to establish the Sorority's position on various issues along with advocating for policies and legislation. Most importantly, social action mobilizes our members, chapters, and the community.



The National Social Action Commission has updated the Social Action Toolkit to serve as a resource to help advance our work on the federal, state and local level. This tool was created to be used as a guide for chapters to implement effective social action activities. It is our hope that the toolkit will be utilized to transform and eliminate issues that negatively impacting our communities.

I would like to thank the National Social Action Commission, especially the Rapid Response Subcommittee, for completing this important work for our illustrious sisterhood. I also would like to thank the National Headquarters staff for assisting in this endeavor. I hope this toolkit will inspire, change, uplift and create meaningful social action. I encourage each of you, my sorors, to exercise the **"Power in Our Voice."**

In Service and In Love,

*Beverly E. Smith*

Beverly E. Smith  
National President & CEO

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## **Section I: Social Action in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.**

# **DELTA'S SOCIAL ACTION GOALS**

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's social action goals are:

- To develop the membership's appreciation of Delta's potential for influence in the community.
- To increase the membership's knowledge of current local and national issues, so that every Delta will be an informed and effective citizen, advocate, and voter.
- To encourage the membership's active participation as individuals in political activity.
- To influence the enactment of legislation, nationally and locally, of particular interest to African Americans and women.
- To maintain vigilance over action or inaction by local judicial and administrative agencies and officials.
- To cultivate, in the membership, a person-to-person relationship with the community power structure.
- To join and volunteer leadership in civic and other social action organizations, including diverse groups.
- To encourage increased appointment and upgrading of African-American women in policy-making positions in government, nationally and locally.
- To assume any other responsibilities as assigned by the National President.

# DELTA'S SOCIAL ACTION HISTORY

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. has been involved in "social action" almost since its inception. On March 3, 1913, nearly six weeks after its founding, several of the Founders marched in the historic Suffragist March under the Delta Sigma Theta banner, the first public act of the Sorority. In developing the Delta Oath, a commitment to action in the public arena was included. Thus, in taking the Oath at initiation, every initiate pledges to use her influence "toward the enactment of laws for the protection of the unfortunate and weak and for the repeal of those depriving human beings of their privileges and rights."

In **1917**, the fledgling organization formed the National Vigilance Committee to coordinate a human rights program. The Committee's primary objective was to persuade the federal government to enact anti-lynching legislation. Under the leadership of 7<sup>th</sup> National President Vivian Osbourne Marsh, Deltas lobbied in Washington with Walter White, the first Executive Director of the NAACP, in support of the anti-lynching bill. Throughout the **1920s and 1930s**, the Committee focused its efforts on fighting the backlash of racism and discrimination against Black women.

In the decade of the **1940s**, the Sorority, in concert with other organizations, lobbied Congress, petitioned President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and mobilized the public to end discrimination and segregation of the armed forces. Deltas became involved in matters concerning social justice for Black Americans. The Sorority aligned itself with organizations such as the NAACP and the Urban League in the fight for civil rights. Delta linked with other organizations to develop the American Council on Human Rights (ACHR), which was organized to study policy and legislation affecting civil rights.

During the **1950s**, Delta's leadership frequently served as consultants to members of Congress and the White House on issues of importance to Black Americans. Delta gave its input on almost every piece of civil or human rights legislation that passed through the Congress. In **1950**, Delta helped found the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a coalition of national organizations that lobbies for the passage of national civil rights and social and economic justice.

In the **late 1950s and early 1960s**, Delta's social action program targeted racism, sexism, discriminatory employment practices, unfair housing policies, and other social ills affecting the Black community. The Sorority played a major role in the Civil Rights Movement. Alumnae and collegiate sorors participated in protest marches, sit-ins, and boycotts. Local chapters also raised money for sorors and other students jailed during sit-ins. In many instances, Grand Chapter also posted bail.

## **Establishment of the Social Action Commission**

In **August 1963**, during the Sorority's Golden Anniversary Convention, the Social Action Commission was established for the purpose of "providing information and direction to the membership on current civil rights issues." Led by its first Co-Chairpersons, Sorors Charlotte R. Lewis and Inez Williston Richardson, the Social Action Commission met in November of 1963 to formulate an organizational structure, a program statement and implementation techniques. At



that time, the Commission established as its objective, "to stimulate social action and education of chapters on current issues." The Commission's primary purpose was lobbying for the enactment of the Voting Rights Act. Since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Delta chapters have been active in conducting voter education and registration drives. Members also participate in get-out-the-vote efforts that provide transportation to the polls.

During **the 1970s**, Deltas were instrumental in ensuring that the desegregation victories of the 1950s and 1960s were enforced in localities throughout the country, particularly in the South. Chapters facilitated meetings with parents to determine if localities were providing adequate assistance to African-American children who were integrating the school system. Also heavily involved in civic participation, Delta chapters spent this decade working tirelessly to provide voter registration and education in disenfranchised communities throughout the United States.

### **Delta Days in the Nation's Capital**

In **1990**, the National Social Action Commission instituted "Delta Days in the Nation's Capital," an annual legislative conference designed to increase members' involvement in the national public policymaking process. Held in Washington, DC, the conference includes legislative briefings, advocacy skill development sessions, issue forums, and discussions with key policy makers. Speakers have included members of Congress, members of the President's cabinet, state and local elected officials, congressional staff, and leaders of national civil and human rights organizations. Registrants also have attended White House briefings in the Old Executive Office Building.

In **August 1995**, Deltas participated in the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's suffrage. Delta members played major roles in each of the special events held, including the theatrical performance at the historic Ford's Theatre, the press conference held in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol and the symposium on the impact of women voting, as well as the march and rally.

In **2009**, Delta Sigma Theta celebrated twenty consecutive years of "Delta Days in the Nation's Capital." The conference hosted a record breaking 1,100 registrants. Under the theme "Advocacy in Action: Strengthening Our Legacy," the densely-packed conference agenda focused on understanding the issues from the 2008 election; keeping the connection with the issues being raised in the new administration especially with the stimulus package; collaborating more on issues of education, health and empowerment in the African-American community; and creating ongoing legislative solutions for the communities that we serve.

### **Delta Sigma Theta gains United Nations' NGO Status and launches Delta Days at the United Nations**

In her four decades on the staff of the United Nations as the Economic and Social (ECOSOC) Council Secretariat, Soror Juanita Bobbitt a member of the Brooklyn Alumnae Chapter observed various women's groups obtaining ECOSOC Consultative Status. Soror Bobbitt believed that securing ECOSOC Consultative Status would greatly expand Delta Sigma Theta's ability to improve the status of women and girls through human rights, social justice, education and economic empowerment.

In 2002, Soror Bobbitt raised the prospect of ECOSOC Consultative Status for Delta Sigma Theta with then National President Marcia L. Fudge, who encouraged her to apply on behalf of the Sorority. Soror Bobbitt completed the complex application process and presented Delta Sigma Theta's credentials before the ECOSOC Committee and in 2003. The Sorority was approved because of Soror Bobbitt's intimate knowledge and understanding of the United Nations' system. Consequently, Delta Sigma Theta became the first African-American Greek-letter organization to receive ECOSOC Consultative Status.

The consultative status allows the Sorority to provide analysis and expertise in monitoring and implementing international agreements on issues of mutual concern. Prior to receiving the special status, the Sorority held general non-governmental status. As an NGO, Delta has the opportunity to gain access to and disseminate information concerning the range of issues on women and children in which the United Nations is involved. Delta's representatives attend regular briefings and disseminate information on UN activities to its members and the community at large.

Soror Bobbitt emphasized the importance of Delta selecting a goal and pursuing that goal with the support and partnerships of other NGOs that support women and girls. She also emphasized the critical need for the Sorority to increase its presence at the UN by attending and participating in meetings, serving on committees, making statements and asking questions in an effort to keep the UN aware of Delta Sigma Theta's active participation in the Commission on the Status of Women's International Conference and the Department of Public Information's focus on global support of women and girls. She encouraged us to mobilize around a cause with other NGOs and network all the time and at every opportunity.

As a result of National President Marcia L. Fudge, Soror Bobbitt and then National President Gwendolyn E. Boyd, the first Delta Day at the UN was held on Wednesday, March 26, 2003. The National Social Action Commissioners and Co-Chairs were 18<sup>th</sup> National President Hortense G. Canady and Ramona H. Edelin.

Gillian Sorenson, Assistant Secretary for External Affairs for Secretary General Kofi Annan, was the guest speaker for the first Delta Day at the UN and she with Hanifa Mezoui, Chief NGO Section for ECOSOC presented a proclamation designating Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. an ECOSOC NGO with Consultative Status.

The Sorority held its inaugural "Delta Day at the UN" on March 27, 2003. The topics presented included: Global Advancement of Women; Elimination of Violence against Women; The State of the World's Children- UNICEF; Women and Aging. Since 2003, Delta Sigma Sorority, Inc. has presented a "side event" at the UN on various topics focusing on our goal to support and advance the status of women and girls.

### **Continuing the Vision of the 22: Social Action in Delta Sigma Theta Today**

The members of the Sorority continue to engage in activities of substance, created by the Social Action Commission, as approved by the Executive Board and delegates to the national

conventions. The Commission's activities reflect emerging and perennial issues of the day, particularly those related to the needs of people of the African Diaspora.

## **SOCIAL ACTION DEFINED**

***Social Action*** is the vehicle through which the Sorority establishes a position on an emerging or perennial public issue, determines the action to be taken, and directs the actions of members, chapters, and representative bodies. An integral part of the Sorority's mission is addressing issues that affect the public well-being. In fact, a condition of membership, as reflected in the Delta Oath, is that every candidate pledges, at the time of initiation, to use her "influence toward the enactment of laws for the protection of the unfortunate and weak and for the repeal of those laws depriving human beings of their privileges and rights."

***The mission of social action in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority is to promote leadership, advocacy, and empowerment to effect social change and public policy.***

## **WHY SORORS OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC. SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN POLITICAL ACTION**

### **POLITICS AND POLITICIANS DECIDE**

THE WARS YOU FIGHT,  
THE INTEREST YOU PAY,  
THE SPEED YOU DRIVE,  
THE TAXES YOU PAY.

### **POLITICS AND POLITICIANS CONTROL**

THE PURITY OF YOUR FOOD,  
THE SCHOOLING OF YOUR CHILDREN,  
THE VALUE OF YOUR MONEY,  
THE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES YOU USE,  
THE FLOOR UNDER YOUR WAGES.

### **POLITICS AND POLITICIANS HAND OUT**

SUBSIDIES TO FARMERS,  
SUBSIDIES TO AIRLINES,  
SUBSIDIES TO OIL COMPANIES,  
SUBSIDIES TO MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS,  
SUBSIDIES TO BANKERS,  
SUBSIDIES TO BUILDERS.

**POLITICS AND POLITICIANS PROTECT OR DESTROY  
YOUR RIGHT TO SPEAK FREELY,  
YOUR RIGHT TO WORSHIP FREELY,  
YOUR RIGHT TO ORGANIZE,  
YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE.**

**POLITICS AND POLITICIANS CONTROL YOUR LIFE**

## **SOCIAL ACTION, PROGRAM AND PROJECTS: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

Social Action program and projects share a common vision in Delta Sigma Theta: active participation in addressing societal needs. As a result, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the concepts. The following chart illustrates the differences:

Program	Project	Social Action
A comprehensive plan to respond to a societal problem	A specific effort to help reach a program goal	Identify existing public policy on an issue or the need for public policy
Consists of many projects	A one-time effort that can be repeated	A plan to take action to affect public policy
Is long range	Is usually of short duration	Ongoing advocacy activities e.g., monitoring action on a public policy issue

### Social Action, Programs and Projects Examples

Program	Project	Social Action
<b>Example 1</b>		
Summit V: Health and Healing – Let It Continue	Sponsor and monitor a booth at a health fair	Advocate for a law to increase funding for diseases that disproportionately impact African Americans and/or women
	Host a community forum on HIV/AIDS	Advocate for a law that provides greater job protection for workers who are infected with HIV/AIDS
<b>Example 2</b>		
Dr. Betty Shabazz Delta Academy	Sponsor an after-school activity for the participants in the Academy	Advocate for federal funding to create after-school programs in low-income communities
	Tutor Academy participants in math and science	Compile and distribute legislative report cards on lawmakers' voting records on legislation to provide funding for math and science education
<b>Example 3</b>		
Domestic Violence Initiative	Sponsor a forum to educate women on the issue of domestic violence	Review current laws and legislation on obtaining protective custody orders; consult and align with other organizations and legislators about plans to make changes in the law
		Co-sponsor training sessions on proposed changes in the law
		Conduct advocacy campaign for changes in local, state, national legislation

# THE NATIONAL SOCIAL ACTION COMMISSION AND THE SOCIAL ACTION NETWORK

Since 1963, the Social Action Commission has been an integral part of the Sorority's structure. In August of 1963, during the Sorority's Golden Anniversary Convention, the Social Action Commission was established for the purpose of providing information and direction to the membership on civil rights issues. Led by its first Co-Chairs, Sorors Charlotte R. Lewis and Inez W. Richardson, the Social Action Commission met in November 1963 to formulate an organizational structure, program statement and action agenda. At that time, the Commission established as its objective -- "to stimulate social action and education of chapters on current issues." The mission statement was revised in 2000; it now defines the purpose of social action ***"to promote leadership, advocacy, and empowerment to effect social change and public policy...link[ing] leaders and organizations through education and communication to promote progressive public policy that results in the improved well-being of individuals and families, especially African Americans."***

Article VII, Section 2 of Grand Chapter *Bylaws* outlines the method of appointment to and responsibilities of the Commission:

## A. Social Action Commission

1. The Social Action Commission shall consist of members and co-chairs appointed by the National President.
2. It shall be the duty of the National Social Action Commission to:
  - (a) develop and coordinate social action programs and projects approved by the National Executive Board; and
  - (b) stimulate interest in social action and educate chapters on current issues.

The Social Action Commission's structure involves an information dissemination network within Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. The first tier is the Social Action Commission. Several of the members are based in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. This enables the Commission to keep abreast of legislative action on national issues of importance to Delta and the communities served by local chapters.

The second tier is the regional level. Each region has a regional social action coordinator to whom the Commissioners send information and suggested action. The regional social action coordinator is responsible for contacting the social action coordinators in each state in their respective regions, and ensuring that social action information is shared with and implemented by collegiate chapters.

The state social action coordinator forwards the information to each chapter in her state. The correspondence is sent to the chapter presidents and the chapter social action chairs in the state. The chapter president and chapter social action chair then coordinate the appropriate chapter

action in response to the information. The chapter ultimately sends a report of its action to National Headquarters.

## **ROLE OF REGIONAL SOCIAL ACTION COORDINATOR**

The regional social action coordinator is an appointed position. The appointment is made by the National President on recommendation of the regional director.

The principle roles of the regional social action coordinator are as follows:

- Assist Commission by disseminating information in the region (state coordinators, etc.)
- Help identify programs and activities to be implemented in the region.
- Assist Commission with implementation of programs in the region: training, leadership team meetings, etc.
- Assist in implementing social action program at regional conference.
- Provide report on social action program in the region.

## **ROLE OF STATE SOCIAL ACTION COORDINATOR**

The state social action coordinator is appointed by the regional director on recommendation of the regional social action coordinator.

The principle roles of the state social action coordinator are as follows:

- Disseminate social action information to the chapters in the state.
- Coordinate implementation of social action programs in the state: training, area or cluster meetings, etc.
- Collect program and issue information from chapters and report to the region and/or National Headquarters.

## **ROLE OF LOCAL CHAPTER**

Each chapter is expected to include a social action component in its operating structure. The customary procedure is that each chapter establishes a social action committee, headed by a social action chair.

Following is the role of the chapter in social action:

- Appoint a chapter social action chairperson.
- Receive social action information from state social action coordinator, or the National Social Action Commission.
- Conduct chapter social action activities and programs in the local community and/or on college/university campus.
- Initiate participation in state and national Delta Days at the capital.
- Prepare resolutions for approval at the regional and national levels.
- Nominate recipients for the biennial social action awards.
- Send report of chapter social action activities and program to the state social action coordinator and to National Headquarters.

# **HOW TO ORGANIZE A CHAPTER SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE**

1. If the chapter has an on-going social action committee, meet with the previous chair for a briefing on the history of the committee.
2. Review the chapter's policies and procedures for guidance if they cover the committee's procedures.
3. Compile information on the committee's previous activities if this has not been done.
4. Encourage interested sorors to become members of the committee.
5. Meet and set the committee agenda for the year.
6. Choose a theme and outline the issues on which the chapter will focus. Be sure to tailor the agenda to include the national social action theme and issues. (Refer to the Sorority's adopted Resolutions, Delta Days "Action Plan" and reports of the National Social Action Commission.)
7. Evaluate the effectiveness of each of the programs or projects. Is the program meeting community needs? Should it be revised or discontinued?
8. Allocate time for emerging local and national issues, e.g., federal budget under consideration in the Congress.
9. The social action committee might consider working with other chapter committees to incorporate a social action element in other chapter activities. For example, the social action committee might work with the committee charged with administering the Dr. Betty Shabazz Delta Academy to coordinate a "Delta Youth Days at City Hall."
10. Set a schedule for future committee meetings.
11. Devise a budget for the year. Prioritize the agenda items and determine which activities are within your committee's budget. Be sure to include funding requests for "Delta Days" at the national, state, and local levels.
12. Report activities to the chapter on a regular basis. It might be helpful to prepare a social action newsletter to facilitate this effort.
13. Prepare interim reports to be sent to the regional social action committee and the National Social Action Commission.



14. Submit an end-of-the-year report of the committee to the chapter program committee and executive board for inclusion in the Chapter's Demographics Report to National Headquarters.

## HOW TO BUILD COALITIONS

***A coalition is an organization of organizations, working together for a common goal.***

Coalitions come in a variety of forms:

- They can be permanent or temporary, single-or multi-issue.
- Geographically defined.
- Limited to certain constituencies or some combination of the above.

Coalitions enable diverse groups to combine their power to accomplish a goal that they all share but one organization could not accomplish on its own.

There are distinct advantages and disadvantages to working in a coalition:

***It enables you to:***

- Win victories that you could not win alone.
- Build an ongoing power base.
- Develop new leaders.
- Increase campaign resources.
- Broaden scope and vision.

***On the other hand, coalition membership may:***

- Distract from other organizations' work.
- Require too many compromises.
- Lead to conflicts with other organizations over control of the campaign or the nuances of policy positions.

**Consider the following four questions before you decide to join a coalition:**

- Who organized the coalition?
- What's your organization self-interest on this issue?
- What can your group and membership contribute to the campaign?
- How will joining the coalition build your organization?

## **Coalition Building**

Successful coalitions operate according to a few broad yet essential principles. The principles outlined below refer to the organizations involved in the coalition rather than to the individual representatives participating in the coalition. Self-interest, diversity of membership, singleness of purpose, continuity of procedure, restraint of emotional prejudices, and consideration of all points of view are principles that are fundamental to an effective coalition.

**In addition to principles, there are certain techniques that will, if employed, strengthen the coalition:**

- **Diversify the membership to provide the broadest base possible.** Be inclusive and develop a mix of working members with resource members.
- **Develop an informal but effective structure** with strong central leadership. Include a management structure.
- **Arrive at a consensus on how the coalition will make decisions** and evaluate its progress.
- **Agree on the specific purposes, preferably a single purpose,** and goals and objectives of the coalition. Keep the purposes simple and the goals and objectives manageable and achievable.

Coalitions are formed to maximize, through joint action, the power of each group to enhance political empowerment through full participation in the electoral process. Coalitions have the advantage of allowing the participating members to concentrate the mix of resources each brings to the common goal, i.e., program management or fiscal expertise, funds, business and political contacts, volunteers, supplies and equipment, space and facilities, etc.

Since local coalitions tend to include the most influential leaders and organizations in that community, their coalescing around the goal of increased political participation demonstrates the importance of the goal and the depth of its support in the local community. Local coalitions, through their joint action, reach a larger constituency and eliminate duplication of efforts.

Local coalitions are comprised of organizations that are often unlike one another in membership, organizational form, purpose and style, and are usually involved in many other activities outside of the local coalition relationship. The coalition such as the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation allows each member organization to continue to maintain its separate identity and to continue to pursue those goals that are its mandate.

## **Coalition Work**

Coalition work is very important, but it's not easy! It should be handled carefully and strategically. The following are some principles to keep in mind.

### **Common Development of Goals**

Coalitions come together around common goals. More than one individual or organization must develop these goals. Don't decide on the issue and the strategy and then "invite others to join you." This doesn't work, because other groups won't feel invested in the project.

### **Sensitivity**

Understand and respect differences between organizations. Each organization has its own particular focus, values, history, and agenda. Find out as much as you can about other organizations and about the history of their interactions in the community and on campus.

### **Self-Interest**

Understand and respect organizational self-interest. People join the coalition to build up their own organizations as well as to work on a common agenda. Your organization will have to ask itself whether it makes sense to join coalitions initiated by other groups. Are they sensitive to your organization's needs and priorities? Are your goals complementary? Do they want to be involved?

### **Give and Take**

Build on existing connections between organizations. Ask a member of your organization who is familiar with another organization to approach them on behalf of the coalition. Ongoing relationships are built by supporting each other's agendas and projects. If you want to ask an organization to support you, consider asking first what its major concerns are and how your organization might support them.

### **Common Strategy**

The strength of a coalition is in its unity. Work with organizations to develop a strategy that makes sense for everyone. All members of the coalition should support the tactics your coalition chooses.

### **Be Strategic**

Don't assume the coalition will come together "naturally." Whom you ask, how you ask them, and the order in which you ask them are all-important. Some organizations won't join if others have been asked first. Some organizations won't work together, and you won't be able to get both on board. Take into account your own goals and organizational considerations.

### **Different Contributions**

Each organization will have something different and important to offer, whether it is volunteers, meeting space, publicity, passing resolutions, funding, refreshments, and other resources.

### **Formalize Your Coalition**

Draw up explicit agreements. Make sure all participants understand what their responsibilities and powers are – this prevents misunderstandings. Be sure to designate a coalition leader.

## **Ensuring Success through Coalitions**

Because coalition membership can be either an asset or a hindrance to a group's overall mission, there are several principles you should follow to ensure success. They are:

- **Choose unifying activities/campaigns.** Coalitions should focus only on activities/campaigns on which all members agree.
- **Understand and respect each group's self-interest.** Coalitions only function well when each group's organizational self-interest is respected and supported.
- **Agree to disagree.** Coalition members will and should disagree on other issues and perhaps even on long-term goals.
- **Structure decision-making carefully.** The coalition's decision-making process should respect and conform to the fact that organizations will have varying amounts of resources—money, staff, time, and volunteers – to contribute.
- **Build a tactical consensus.** If the coalition is essential to winning victories on an issue, utilize only tactics on which every coalition member can agree. Tactics that weaken the coalition also will weaken the campaign. Some groups may need longer to convince their membership of the necessity of more confrontational tactics. If one group insists on using a tactic that others oppose, make sure the group does it in its own name, not in the name of the coalition.
- **Achieve significant successes.** If the coalition is able to successfully increase civic participation and thereby significantly improve the life of the community, it will have a long life.
- **Distribute credit fairly.** Make sure that every group receives public recognition for its contributions to the campaign. Organizations need public recognition to feel that their contributions to the coalition are worthwhile. Never allow the coalition to receive credit at the expense of the member groups. At the same time, make sure the groups that have the most to give the campaign—either in money, staff, or volunteers—get the most credit.

## **Issue Development for Coalition Building**

### **Choosing an Issue**

The following checklist will help you choose what issues are right for the group.

### ***A good issue:***

- **Is worthwhile.**
- **Is winnable.** Can you win on this issue with a solid plan?
- **Will have a widely felt impact** on your constituency. Many people must feel that there is a real problem and agree to the solution.
- **Is deeply felt.**
- **Is easy to understand.** Can this issue be explained in a single headline?
- **Has a clear target.** Can you identify one person who has the power to meet your demands on this issue? A target is the person who has the power to give you what you want.
- **Has a clear time frame.** Can you identify a specific moment – such as an election or public hearing – at which you will be able to bring the campaign to fruition?
- **Is non-divisive.** Do the vast majority of your group's members support work on this issue?
- **Will build leadership.** Is this an issue on which large numbers of people can work?
- **Strengthen the organization.** Will this issue help your group increase its membership and resources?
- **Is conducive to fundraising.**
- **Is consistent with the group's mission and values.**

### **Popular Tactics for Issue Campaigns**

There are several useful tactics for issue campaigns.

They include:

- Nonpartisan voter registration, education and get-out-the-vote drives.
- Public Hearings.
- Organizing a large turnout for an official hearing.
- Mass demonstrations.
- Petition drives.
- Letter writing campaigns.
- Educational forums and teach-ins.
- Accountability sessions, used to pressure officials.
- Civil disobedience.
- Lawsuits and other legal actions.
- Boycotts.

## **Campus Coalition Building**

All successful voter registration campaigns have one thing in common: they are run by a coalition of people on campus or in the local community. Before you undertake a registration drive on your campus, it is critical that you form a coalition to help you in this task. Look to all segments of the campus community: administrator, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and staff. Each group will bring different strengths, which will make a more successful campaign.

Be sure to look off-campus for community organizations that might be interested in assisting your nonpartisan voter registration campaign. When you form your coalition, be sure to include local businesses on and off your campus—the bookstore and food service vendors on campus; pizza restaurants, bookstores, and grocery stores off campus. As sponsors of your coalition, these businesses can provide funding or other in-kind services (photocopies, postage, food for volunteers, etc.) in exchange for acknowledgement of their sponsorship. Think of everyone with whom you can possibly work and make a concerted effort to reach them. Don't just ask them to attend your meeting – attend their meetings to pitch your voter registration plan.

### **Once you have formed the basis of your coalition, set up an organizing meeting.**

Here's how to get the meeting off the ground.

1. Schedule it. Find a room on campus or in the community in which to hold the meeting. Make sure it is convenient, or few people will attend.
2. Prepare a contact list of all the organizations you think should be there, including all segments of your campus. The list should include the name and phone number of a contact person for each group.
3. Invite each contact person to attend the meeting.
4. The day of the meeting: Make reminder calls to all the people you invited, set an agenda, and arrange for refreshments.
5. Begin the meeting with a round of introductions, including a brief description of each group represented at the meeting and the strengths it has to offer the project.
6. Talk about tactics you can use to increase the voter registration numbers on your campus. Explain some of the programs outlined here. Don't limit yourself, use your imagination – be creative! Just remember, your objective is to run a nonpartisan campaign and register as many people as possible on your campus.

7. Agree on a game plan for voter registration. How many people do you want to register and when you want to register them?
8. Assign tasks to make sure it happens. Each person in the room should leave with a specific assignment and a deadline for reporting back to the group.

# WEARING OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SYMBOLS IN PROTESTS



For 105 years, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. has been on the forefront of change in America. Our first social action act as an organization was the participation in the Women's Suffrage March.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated that, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Today, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. stands united with efforts calling for change in this country. It is imperative that we continue to be the voice for the voiceless and resist injustices being faced by our communities.

As an organization, we support the local advocacy efforts of our members. However, we need to ensure that our members are properly engaging in advocacy activities such as marches and rallies to avoid any violation of the organization's policies or procedures.

Therefore, the National Social Action Commission has compiled the Frequently Asked Questions below to assist chapters and sorors in their local engagement in such efforts.

## **Marches, Rallies and Protesting Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

The African-American community has a long history of advocating for social change through marches and peaceful protests. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is committed to social advocacy consistent with its mission and goals. The Sorority has lived this commitment from the beginning, commencing with the first public act of our courageous Founders - participation in the Women's Suffrage March of 1913.

This FAQ serves as guidance to members and chapters who wish to participate in marches rallies, and protests.

**Is it permissible for a chapter to participate in a march, rally and protest either in support of or in opposition to a particular issue or position?**

Yes. Delta chapters can participate in peaceful marches, rallies and protests as a chapter. However, should the chapter wish to participate as a sponsor or host for a march or protest, the chapter must first contact the National Social Action Commission before committing to sponsorship or host status.

**Can I wear my symbols and other Delta insignia during marches, rallies and protests?**

Yes. Symbols (letters) and other insignia may be worn at a march, rally, protest, or any social action event. Be prudent, use sound judgment and do not bring harm to yourself and/or the Sorority.

Remember, when wearing symbols and other insignia, you have chosen to present yourself as a member of the organization and not as an individual. When you are in a group or gathering with other sorors, wearing symbols or other insignia, you are considered a part of the collective body even if you are among the group but not wearing letters at the time.



**Is it permissible for a chapter to participate in a march, rally and protest either in support of or in opposition to a politician or candidate okay?**

No. As a private non-profit 501 (c)(7) organization, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. may not support, endorse or campaign for individual political candidates nor are its members permitted to do so when representing the Sorority. Chapters may not arrange, sponsor, or participate in an event, rally, or protest that explicitly supports or opposes any political candidate by name or political party.

Chapters can participate in events supporting or opposing a policy issue in alignment with the Sorority's mission and social action resolutions. Members of the Sorority may wear their insignia when participating in such events. If a member of the Sorority participates in an event explicitly supporting or opposing a political candidate by name, the member should not wear the insignia.

**What should I do if the media attempts to interview me at a march, rally or protest?**

If asked by the media: "What is Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.'s position on any issue?"

- No one can speak for the Sorority except for the National President, please refer any media inquiries to the National Executive Director at our National Headquarters in Washington, DC.

**What are the social media guidelines that should be followed for marches, rallies and protests?**

- You can use social media to promote and market social action events, activities and/or efforts.
- You can post pictures of peaceful social action events, efforts and/or activities (i.e. Voter Registration, Delta Days at State Capital, Get Out the Vote, Town Hall Meetings, etc.).

**What can I do as an individual?**

As an individual, you can wear and do whatever is best for you. Sorors, please remember when wearing symbols and other insignia, you must follow the policies & procedures of the organization. In addition, even when attending a march, rally or protest as an individual and not with a chapter, be prudent, use sound judgment and do not bring harm to yourself and/or the Sorority.

When wearing symbols and other insignia, you have chosen to present yourself as a member of the organization and not as an individual. Even if you're among the group but not wearing letters at the time, when you are gathered together with a group of sorors wearing letters, you're considered a part of the collective body.

**What should I do if I have questions about this FAQ?**

Contact the National Social Action Commission at [socialaction@deltasigmatheta.org](mailto:socialaction@deltasigmatheta.org).



# **SOCIAL ACTION WORKTOOL**

**A Guide For Implementing Effective Social Action Projects And Activities**

Prepared by the Social Action Commission (SAC)  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc

## **SECTION II: EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY**



# **SOCIAL ACTION WORKTOOL**

**A Guide For Implementing Effective Social Action Projects And Activities**

Prepared by the Social Action Commission (SAC)  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Section II: Effective Advocacy**

Supporting candidates for elected office is a meaningless exercise if we don't hold them accountable for the policies they champion.

The next section of the worktool will familiarize sorors with protocols, best practices, and resources to help them advocate for issues with elected officials. From advice for getting the most of an in-person office visit to tips for following up with written correspondence or writing timely and relevant issue papers, the information in this section will help make you a more effective advocate for the policy issues that matter to your community.

## **WHAT MATTERS TO YOU: HOW TO DETERMINE POLICY PRIORITIES AT THE LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL**

### **It's your responsibility to understand local government**

Local units of government (cities, townships, counties) have their own rules, elections process and responsibilities. Chapter social action committees need to know how their local unit of government operates. Annually, chapter social action committees are encouraged to create a document that includes:

- Names and contact information for local elected officials
- Schedule for public meetings
- Overview of how public body operates (e.g., city manager or mayor)

Chapters are strongly encouraged to develop an annual action plan for establishing and maintaining relationships with local elected officials that includes Delta Day at City Hall, Delta Day at the County Commission, Delta Day at the School Board etc.

As issues emerge that impact the community, social action committees should develop a plan of action for sorors to be made aware of the issues and take advantage of opportunities to weigh

in on them. Issue papers should be developed (see page 35) to explain succinctly why the issue matters and how sorors can make their concerns known to appropriate parties.

## **State Issues**

State government is often where policies that affect one's everyday life are formulated. For example, the water crisis in Flint, Michigan was a local issue but the state's institution of an "Emergency Manager" statute precipitated it.

While hosting a periodic "Delta Day in the State Capital" is an important way to make Delta's voice heard on state issues, it alone is not sufficient. State social action coordinators are strongly encouraged to work with chapter social action chairs to develop an annual plan of action to build relationships with sorors and others who are knowledgeable about the workings of state government in the legislative, executive and judicial branches. Leveraging these relationships, state social action coordinators should also assign a representative to monitor opportunities for sorors to receive appointments to state boards and commissions.

State social action coordinators are also strongly encouraged to:

- Sign up for policy briefings from established organizations that monitor policy issues that matter to sorors in your state.
- Establish a communications tool to report on legislation that matters to sorors in your state (e.g. monthly email update, written policy updates)

## **WEBSITES TO MONITOR POLICY ISSUES**

The Social Action Commission encourages members to keep abreast of action on issues of importance to our Sorority and the communities that we serve. Please bookmark the websites below for access to a wealth of knowledge on legislative and public policy issues and news.

### ***AARP***

***[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)***

Nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people over the age of 50.

### ***Center on Budget and Policy Priorities***

***<http://www.cbpp.org>***

Nonpartisan research organization and policy institute that conducts research and analysis on a range of government policies and programs, with an emphasis on those affecting low and moderate-income people.

### ***Congress.gov—Library of Congress***

***<https://www.congress.gov/>***

Congress.gov replaces the THOMAS system that was launched in January 1995 and retired in 2016. It is the official website for U.S. federal legislative information. Congress.gov provides

access to accurate, timely, and complete legislative information for members of Congress, legislative agencies, and the public.

***Congressional Black Caucus***

***[http:// www.congressionalblackcaucus.net](http://www.congressionalblackcaucus.net)***

African-American members of the Congress joined together to strengthen their efforts to address the legislative concerns of Black and minority citizens.

***Congressional Black Caucus Foundation***

***[http:// www.cbcfinc.org](http://www.cbcfinc.org)***

Nonpartisan, nonprofit, public policy, research and educational institute founded by members of the Congressional Black Caucus to focus on issues affecting the African-American community.

***Congressional Research Service Reports—Library of Congress***

***<https://crsreports.congress.gov/>***

In March 2018, the U.S. Congress passed a law requiring the Library of Congress in collaboration with its Congressional Research Service (CRS) to create this publicly accessible website of CRS policy reports. The reports, accessible via Congress.gov, provide background and analysis on a wide range of legislative and policy issues that are useful to the public interest. Although the Library of Congress releases CRS reports directly to the public via this website, CRS works exclusively for Congress where it provides anticipatory and on-demand research and analysis to support their legislative, oversight, and representational duties.

***Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation—Library of Congress (Constitution Annotated)***

***<https://www.congress.gov/constitution-annotated/>***

Accessible via Congress.gov, this website “contains legal analysis and interpretation of the United States Constitution, based primarily on Supreme Court case law. This regularly updated resource is especially useful when researching the constitutional implications of a specific issue or topic.” The website also provides timely information on recent Supreme Court decisions.

***Families USA***

***<http://www.familiesusa.org>***

A national nonprofit organization that advocates for high quality, affordable health and long-term health care for all Americans.

***The Foundation for Democracy in Africa***

***<http://democracy-africa.org>***

A charitable, nonprofit development organization committed to promoting democracy, sustainable development and economic growth throughout Africa.

***The Hill***

***[http:// www.hillnews.com](http://www.hillnews.com)***

Weekly newspaper that provides reports and analyses of actions in the Congress.

***Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies***

***<http://www.jointcenter.org>***

A national, nonprofit research and public policy institution that provides research on a broad range of public policy issues of concern to African Americans and other communities of color.

***Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights***

***[http:// www.civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org)***

Diverse civil rights coalition of more than 180 national organizations that promotes the enactment and enforcement of effective civil rights legislation and policy.

***NAACP***

***<http://www.naACP.org>***

The nation's oldest civil rights organization dedicated to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and well-being of all persons.

***NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.***

***<http://www.naACPldf.org>***

The nation's premier civil rights law firm dedicated to making equal justice a reality for African Americans and all other disenfranchised individuals.

***National Coalition on Black Civic Participation***

***<http://www.bigvote.org>***

Nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to increasing African-American participation in civil society.

***National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare***

***<http://www.hcpssm.org>***

Grassroots organization that advocates for Social Security, Medicare, and other health and retirement benefits.

***Roll Call***

***<http://www.rollcall.com>***

News and commentary on Capitol Hill. Established in 1955.

***The Sentencing Project***

***<http://www.sentencingproject.com>***

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which promotes reduced reliance on incarceration and increased use of more effective and humane alternatives to deal with crime. It is a nationally recognized source of criminal justice policy analysis, data, and program information. Its reports, publications, and staff are relied upon by the public, policymakers and the media.

**United Nations (UN)**

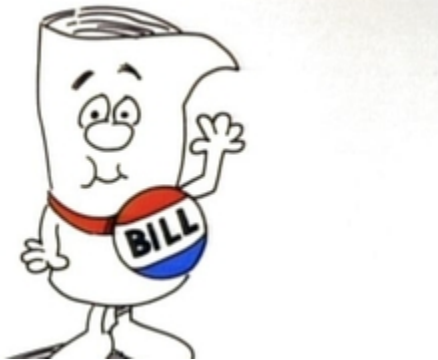
**<http://www.un.org>**

An international organization of member states established to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to cooperate in solving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in attaining these goals.

**U.S. Government Departments, Agencies, and Commissions**

African Development Foundation	<a href="http://www.adf.gov">http://www.adf.gov</a>
Election Assistance Commission	<a href="http://www.eac.gov">http://www.eac.gov</a>
Social Security Administration	<a href="http://www.ssa.gov">http://www.ssa.gov</a>
U.S. Agency for International Development	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov">http://www.usaid.gov</a>
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights	<a href="http://www.usccr.gov">http://www.usccr.gov</a>
U.S. Department of Justice	<a href="http://www.usdoj.gov">http://www.usdoj.gov</a>
U.S. Department of State	<a href="http://www.state.gov">http://www.state.gov</a>
U.S. House of Representatives	<a href="http://www.house.gov">http://www.house.gov</a>
U.S. Senate	<a href="http://www.senate.gov">http://www.senate.gov</a>
U.S. Supreme Court	<a href="http://www.supremecourtus.gov">http://www.supremecourtus.gov</a>
White House	<a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov">http://www.whitehouse.gov</a>

# THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



**A. Legislation is introduced** - Any member can introduce a piece of legislation

**House** - Legislation is handed to the clerk of the House or placed in the [hopper](#).

**Senate** - Members must gain recognition of the presiding officer to announce the introduction of a bill during the [morning hour](#). If any Senator objects, the introduction of the bill is postponed until the next day.

- The bill is assigned a number. (e.g. HR 1 or S 1)
- The bill is labeled with the sponsor's name.
- The bill is sent to the Government Publishing Office (GPO) and copies are made.
- Senate bills can be jointly [sponsored](#).
- Members can [cosponsor](#) the piece of Legislation.

**B. Committee Action** - The bill is referred to the appropriate committee by the Speaker of the House or the presiding officer in the Senate. Most often, the actual referral decision is made by the House or Senate parliamentarian. Bills may be referred to more than one committee and it may be split so that parts are sent to different committees. The Speaker of the House may set time limits on committees. Bills are placed on the calendar of the committee to which they have been assigned. Failure to act on a bill is equivalent to killing it. Bills in the House can only be released from committee *without* a proper committee vote by a [discharge petition](#) signed by a majority of the House membership (218 members).

Committee Steps:

1. Comments about the bill's merit are requested by government agencies.
2. Bill can be assigned to subcommittee by Chairman.
3. Hearings may be held.
4. Subcommittees report their findings to the full committee.
5. Finally there is a vote by the full committee - the bill is "ordered to be reported."
6. A committee will hold a "mark-up" session during which it will make revisions and additions. If substantial amendments are made, the committee can order the introduction of a "clean bill" which will include the proposed amendments. This new bill will have a new number and will be sent to the floor while the old bill is discarded. The chamber must



approve, change or reject all committee amendments before conducting a final passage vote.

7. After the bill is reported, the committee staff prepares a written report explaining why they favor the bill and why they wish to see their amendments, if any, adopted. Committee members who oppose a bill sometimes write a dissenting opinion in the report. The report is sent back to the whole chamber and is placed on the calendar.
8. In the House, most bills go to the Rules committee before reaching the floor. The committee adopts rules that will govern the procedures under which the bill will be considered by the House. A "closed rule" sets strict time limits on debate and forbids the introduction of amendments. These rules can have a major impact on whether the bill passes. The rules committee can be bypassed in three ways: 1) members can move rules to be suspended (requires 2/3 vote) 2) a discharge petition can be filed 3) the House can use a [Calendar Wednesday](#) procedure.

### C. Floor Action

1. Legislation is placed on the Calendar

House: Bills are placed on one of four [House Calendars](#). They are usually placed on the calendars in the order of which they are reported yet they do not usually come to floor in this order – some bills never reach the floor at all. The Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader decide what will reach the floor and when. (Legislation can also be brought to the floor by a [discharge petition](#).)

Senate: Legislation is placed on the Legislative Calendar. There is also an Executive calendar to deal with treaties and nominations. Scheduling of legislation is the job of the Majority Leader. Bills can be brought to the floor whenever a majority of the Senate chooses.

2. Debate

House: Debate is limited by the rules formulated in the Rules Committee. The [Committee of the Whole](#) debates and amends the bill but cannot technically pass it. Debate is guided by the Sponsoring Committee and time is divided equally between proponents and opponents. The Committee decides how much time to allot to each person. Amendments must be [germane](#) to the subject of a bill - no [riders](#) are allowed. The bill is reported back to the House (to itself) and is voted on. A quorum call is a vote to make sure that there are enough members present (218) to have a final vote. If there is not a quorum, the House will adjourn or will send the Sergeant at Arms out to round up missing members.

Senate: debate is unlimited unless [cloture](#) is invoked. Members can speak as long as they want and amendments need not be germane - riders are often offered. Entire bills can therefore be offered as amendments to other bills. Unless cloture is invoked, Senators can use a [filibuster](#) to defeat a measure by "talking it to death."

- Vote - the bill is voted on. If passed, it is then sent to the other chamber unless that chamber already has a similar measure under consideration. If either chamber does not pass the bill then it dies. If the House and Senate pass the same bill then it is sent to the President. If the House and Senate pass different bills they are sent to Conference Committee. Most major legislation goes to a Conference Committee.

#### **D. Conference Committee**

1. Members from each house form a conference committee and meet to work out the differences. The committee is usually made up of senior members who are appointed by the presiding officers of the committee that originally dealt with the bill. The representatives from each house work to maintain their version of the bill.
2. If the Conference Committee reaches a compromise, it prepares a written conference report, which is submitted to each chamber.
3. The conference report must be approved by both the House and the Senate.

#### **E. The President - The bill is sent to the President for review.**

1. A bill becomes law if signed by the President or if not signed within 10 days and Congress is in session.
2. If Congress adjourns before the 10 days and the President has not signed the bill then it does not become law ("Pocket Veto.")
3. If the President vetoes the bill it is sent back to Congress with a note listing his/her reasons. The chamber that originated the legislation can attempt to override the veto by a vote of two-thirds of those present. If the veto of the bill is overridden in both chambers then it becomes law.

**F. The Bill Becomes A Law** - once a bill is signed by the President or his veto is overridden by both houses, it becomes a law and is assigned an official number.

**NOTE:** When a bill passed by the House of Representatives comes to the Senate, the bill may be placed directly on the calendar without being referred to a committee, as was the case when the House passed the Voting Rights Act Extension of 1965. This procedure is usually used to circumvent a recalcitrant committee that would purposely delay action on a measure. The action taken in 1965 was to bypass the Senate Judiciary Committee, then chaired by Senator James Eastland.

*Information taken from [www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org)*

## **HOW TO TRACK FEDERAL LEGISLATION**

While the legislative process may seem complex and often times confusing, the Internet has made tracking congressional legislation very easy. During the 104th Congress, it was decided that federal legislative information should be freely available to the public. As a result of successful legislation, the Library of Congress was directed to create THOMAS, an online legislative tracking system. Since its initiation, THOMAS has been expanded to include congressional calendars, voting records, committee reports and other government resources. THOMAS retired in 2016 and was replaced by Congress.gov.

Log onto <https://www.congress.gov/> for access to search tools and resources that will help you navigate the legislative process and track legislation of importance. For instance, you may search

for legislation by key words, congressional session, bill number, representative or senator (sponsor/co-sponsor), committee name, or legislative action.

## HOW TO WRITE LEGISLATIVE LETTERS

Letters are used by elected officials to gauge interest in an issue. Therefore, it is important that you correspond with them to apprise them of your views on issues of concern to Delta, your community, and you as a constituent. Due to the lengthy mail screening process of Congress, it is helpful to email a copy of legislative correspondence. Fax numbers and addresses for legislators are available at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov). The following are tips for writing personal, thoughtful, specific and concise letters:

- Spell your legislator's name correctly. Know his/her proper title—e.g., Senator or Representative. All elected officials should be addressed as "Honorable."
- Write as a constituent. Use personal stationery rather than a postcard or form letter.
- Write one page or less. If you have more information than will fit on one page, include it as an attachment. Limit attachments to a few pages.
- Cover only one subject or issue per letter. It is acceptable to write on two issues related to the same topic. For example, a request to support a bill addressing school construction funding could be included in a letter requesting support for a bill to increase funding to reduce class size.
- Be as specific as possible. If you are writing regarding legislation, refer to the title and/or number of the bill.
- Make sure your letter is timely. It should arrive while the issue is alive. You can find information on the status of legislation on the website of the lawmaking body or an advocacy group that is closely monitoring the issue.
- Request specific action by your elected official, e.g., vote for or against a bill.
- Request a reply. Be advised that elected officials who do not represent you are not likely to respond to your letter. They might refer your correspondence to your elected representative.
- Include your name and address on the letter. It is important that you include your address as it indicates that you are a constituent.
- If possible, type your letter. If you must hand write a letter, write legibly.
- Email and electronic submission of letters is common and sometimes preferred by legislators.
- Write each legislator individually. Avoid copies and form letters.
- Inform your legislator that you will continue monitoring his/her action on the issue.

# SAMPLE FORMAT OF LETTER TO A LEGISLATOR

Date

The Honorable (first and last names)

(Office Address)

RE: (Refer to the bill number and/or title)

Dear (title) (last name):

## **Introduction**

### Purpose of Letter

- Identify yourself as a registered voter/constituent
- Request action on the legislation

## **Body**

### Rationale/Supporting data

(Limit to 2 or 3 points)

- Findings of authoritative entities
- Reports by government organizations, advocacy groups or scholars

## **Closing**

Thank the legislator for his/her time and consideration of your views.

Request a timely reply.

Remind legislator that you will continue monitoring the issue.

Sincerely,

(signature)

Your name (printed)

Complete mailing address

# SAMPLE LETTER TO A LEGISLATOR

January 1, 2019

The Honorable John Smith  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Count Every Vote Act (H.R. 939/S. 450)**

Dear Congressman Smith:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a registered and active voter in \_\_\_\_\_ district/state. I write to request your support for the "Count Every Vote Act of 2005" (H.R. 939/S. 450), a bill that would restore voting rights to felons who have served their time. This legislation is desperately needed to eliminate gross inequities in voting rights laws.

It is reported that 13% of African-American males, over one million, have had their voting rights denied as a result of felony disenfranchisement laws. Additionally, nearly 3.9 million U.S. citizens who are incarcerated, on probation or have completed their sentences have been disenfranchised by these laws. In recent years the number of incarcerated has grown exponentially due to changes in society, the economy, and changes in federal laws governing stricter sentencing as a result of the "drug war." It has been argued that people of color are more likely to become a part of the criminal justice system and are therefore impacted greatest by disenfranchisement laws. It has also been argued that state disenfranchisement laws are a form of discrimination and should be subject to the protection granted by the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Although some states restore voting rights to ex-offenders, state officials do not make information about the restoration process readily available to ex-offenders. Also, in many cases, the process is expensive and lengthy, even requiring legislative approval and the governor's signature. Few ex-offenders have the time or resources to challenge the system and therefore no longer participate in the voting process.

Federal involvement to challenge disenfranchisement laws has been largely absent, even though state disenfranchisement laws impact the federal elections. While each state has been granted the right to determine qualifications, it must be noted that qualifications must be met in order to vote in national elections. H.R. 939 is needed to guarantee a uniform and just system that would speedily restore voting rights to citizens who have paid their debts to society. I trust that you will give serious consideration to my views and support H.R. 939. I look forward to hearing your position on the bill. Be advised that I will continue to monitor your action on this important issue.

Sincerely,

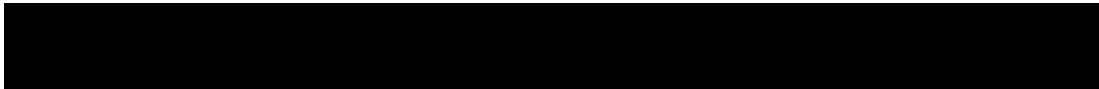
Janet Doe  
2653 Any Street  
Any State, USA 00000

# HOW TO ADDRESS ELECTED OFFICIALS

The proper forms of address and salutation for various officials are listed below. All letters should be signed "Sincerely," and contain your name, signature, and address.

Position	Mail	Salutation	Conversation
President	President of the United States  The White House  Washington, DC 20050	Dear Mr. President:	Mr. President
Vice President	Vice President of the United States  United States Senate  Washington, DC 20050	Dear Mr. Vice President:	Mr. Vice President
U.S. Senator	The Honorable (full name)	Dear Senator...	Senator...
U.S. Representative	The Honorable (full name)  U.S. House of Representatives	Dear Congressman/ Congresswoman...	Congressman/ Congresswoman...

Governor	The Honorable (full name)	Dear Governor...	Governor...
Lt. Governor	The Honorable (full name)	Dear Lt. Governor...	Lt. Governor...
State Senator	The Honorable (full name)	Dear Senator...	Senator...
State Delegates	The Honorable (full name)	Dear Delegate...	Delegate...



Mayor	The Honorable (full name)  Mayor of (city name)	Dear Mayor...	Mayor...
City Council	The Honorable (full name)	Dear Councilman/ Councilwoman...	Councilman/ Councilwoman...
		Dear Alderman/ Alderwoman...	Alderman/ Alderwoman...

# HOW TO PREPARE EFFECTIVE ISSUE PAPERS

1. Prior to preparing and distributing issue papers, you should acquire some basic information.
  - a. Obtain the names and addresses of your congressional, state, county, and/or municipal representatives;
  - b. Secure a little background information on your representatives, their committee assignments in the legislative body, commission or board on which they serve, and their voting records. You can find this information on their websites, legislative newsletters, newspapers, legislative directories and legislative report cards issued by advocacy groups.
2. Selection of the issue.
  - a. Select one issue (e.g., school construction funding). The issue should be timely; it should be under consideration now or will be in the near future.
  - b. Review the Delta Sigma Theta Codification of Resolutions and Action Plans to determine if the Sorority has taken a position or action on the issue.
  - c. Determine which legislative committee(s), commission, or board has jurisdiction over legislation that addresses the issue. For example, school construction funding would come under the jurisdiction of the education committee, whereas water rate increases would come under the jurisdiction of the public utilities commission.
  - d. Use the information gathered during the pre-planning phase to determine your representative's position on the issue, particularly how he/she voted, if a vote was taken.
  - e. Check legislative services on the website of the lawmaking or rulemaking body, commission, or board to find out if any legislation has been offered.
3. Prepare a one-page fact sheet.
  - a. Include a brief explanation of the issue. Specific language can be borrowed from writings and papers of other organizations and coalitions such as the NAACP or League of Women Voters.
  - b. Give a brief explanation of how the issue will affect a particular constituency—e.g., African Americans, women, children, etc.



- c. Be certain to include your name, city, state, and telephone for your representative to call for more information.
  - d. Identify any pending legislation on this issue by title and number.
  - e. Be brief and to the point. Avoid superfluous information.
- 4. Distribute the issue paper at a chapter meeting or through chapter mailings.
  - a. Include an explanation of the issue, outlining the major points. Be sure to address (counter) the major arguments of opposing view(s).
  - b. Include action item(s), with an accompanying example of how to execute the action item(s), for sorors or the chapter.
- 5. Include a copy of the Sorority or chapter's position on the issue if one has been stated. For example, if Grand Chapter has adopted a resolution stating a position on the issue and the stated position is *germane*, include a copy of the resolution as supplemental information.
- 6. Network and coordinate with others on the issue.
  - a. Inform other coalitions of the chapter's actions and send them copies of the issue papers.
  - b. Sign on with other coalitions as a "team," where appropriate. (See *How to Form A Coalition Section*.)
  - c. Notify other Delta chapters in your area of your actions and send them copies of the issue papers.
- 7. Send copies of all issue papers to your region's social action coordinator and National Headquarters, marked to the attention of the National Social Action Commission.

# EXAMPLE OF AN ISSUE PAPER

## Death Penalty

As the former Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun wrote, "Despite decades of legal tinkering, the death penalty remains fraught with arbitrariness, discrimination, caprice and mistakes." Montclair Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is staunchly opposed to the death penalty. Purely retributive in nature—countless studies show that it does not deter crime---the death penalty is immoral, unjust and uncivilized. After careful study of the death penalty in the United States, in 1978, the United Nations' Human Rights Commission issued a report which concluded, "Race, ethnic origin and economic status appear to be key determinants of who will, and who will not, receive a sentence of death." These problems are not confined to the states. A recent Department of Justice review found that in 75 percent of the cases in which a federal prosecutor sought the death penalty, the defendant was a member of a minority group. Because we believe that no amount of tinkering will rescue the death penalty from its inherent flaws, Montclair Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports legislation to abolish the death penalty.

Montclair Deltas stand along with the American Bar Association in calling for a death penalty moratorium across the United States. Terming the death penalty a "haphazard maze of unfair practices," the ABA has forcefully documented the injustices facing many of those sentenced to death. These included absence of competent counsel, the pervasive influence of racial factors, and the failure to protect the mentally ill and retarded, the sentencing of children to death, and the evisceration by Congress of the critical fail-safe mechanism of federal post-conviction review (habeas corpus). A growing number of death penalty supporters now concede that the flagrant fallibility of our fact-finding mechanisms warrants a moratorium. Governor George Ryan, a supporter of the death penalty, instituted a moratorium in Illinois, where an equal number of prisoners had been exonerated as had been executed since reinstatement of the death penalty in the 1970s. Montclair Deltas support individual state efforts to halt and study the death penalty as well as federal legislation to institute a national moratorium.

An issue overlapping our anti-death penalty advocacy is access to DNA evidence. Increasingly sophisticated technology has proven that innocent Americans are wrongfully convicted of all types of crimes in all courts as documented in the Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice study "Convicted by Juries, Exonerated by Science"(June, 1996). Over 75 people sentenced to death in America since 1976 have been later proven innocent. Many others have had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment because of serious doubts about their guilt. And some have been tragically executed despite serious questions concerning their innocence. Because access to DNA evidence should not depend on where the crime was committed, Montclair Deltas support the "Innocence Protection Act," which, in addition to raising the bar of counsel for death penalty cases, would institute national standards for the reasonable preservation of biological evidence and fair access to DNA evidence.

Along with the great many law professors and constitutional scholars across America, Montclair Deltas condemn the hastily-considered and unconscionable habeas corpus “reforms” ushered into law by the “Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996.” Congress should reinstate the guarantee of meaningful access to federal court review of state and federal convictions and sentences. Innocent Americans are wrongfully convicted for all types of crimes, in all courts---as revealed in “Convicted by Juries, Exonerated by Science.” While only 1% of habeas petitions to federal courts involve the death penalty, the consequences of a death sentence, in particular, warrant all reasonable safeguards that our legal system can provide. Studies indicate that federal judges are compelled to grant relief in as many as 40% of the death sentences presented before them on habeas review. Such review traditionally has been the last chance for innocent persons imprisoned or sentenced to die. Under the new habeas laws, the most fundamental American principles of justice are jettisoned. At trial, it only takes one juror with a reasonable doubt as to the government’s proof to prevent an accused person from going to prison or the execution chamber. But under the new “fail-safe” habeas law, should new evidence of innocence come to light (within a one-year time table), it must be so powerful that ALL TWELVE of the jurors would have voted for acquittal—and that is just to obtain a hearing on the matter!

Congress must at very least ensure a targeted “new evidence” exception to the arbitrary 1997 restriction. This is similar to the fairness exception enacted by Illinois, which rightly recognizes that there should be special exception for newly discovered scientific evidence in post-conviction rules. Montclair Deltas staunchly oppose statutes, rules and regulations which would expedite the post-conviction appellate process in every case, but particularly in death penalty cases. Congress must refrain from further limiting post-conviction access to the courts. Congress must revise the law at the federal level to allow for an effective fail-safe mechanism against such injustice.

*(Written by the Montclair, New Jersey Alumnae Chapter.)*

## **PREPARATION: LEGISLATIVE ROLE-PLAY**

Role-play as used in its simplest form can be a part of training during Delta Days at the State Capital, during a regional workshop, or during a chapter internal workshop. We live in a society inhabited by people who differ in their views and priorities; and whose social values legitimately conflict with one another. As a result, our legislators are mandated to resolve complex and controversial issues within the context of a productive social order. Since legislators represent constituents with such diverse attitudes, needs and desires, it is incumbent upon us, not only to keep abreast of current critical issues, but to impact upon them and share in the formation of public policy. To that end, we visit our state capitals.

While the experience is ritual for some, it is always new for others. Many find the idea of their first face to face encounter with authority figures of the stature of legislators intimidating. Role-playing is one technique that can be used to help alleviate those anxieties. It is an extremely versatile vehicle that lends itself to any number of useful objectives.

On its simplest level, role-playing is dealing with problems through simulated action. It may involve real or hypothetical situations. It may last five minutes or one-half an hour depending on its scenario and its objective. It may be used solely to reinforce the ideas set forth in applicable Social Action Commission manuals by using an unencumbered hypothetical scenario. Deeper dimensions may be added by introducing a current issue into the situation. In either case, all pertinent facts must be included in the case material, so that it will not be vague and frustrating. Our purpose is to assure sorors that meeting with their legislators is a relatively straightforward situation in which they need not have fear if they have done their homework.

The presentation can, therefore, be given at the beginning of the Delta Days activities so that special note may be taken of materials that may be useful in the culminating meeting with a legislator. It may be equally effective as part of the final workshop before that all-important meeting — a time when all materials have been gathered without a clear understanding of what to do with them.

However, one word of caution should be given. In addition to its many uses, role-playing incorporates an appealing set of activities. Because both the action and the acting are so enjoyable, it is easy to forget that role-play is only a vehicle for demonstrating the content of the instruction and not an end in itself.

Role-play is designed to foster the analysis of values and behavior; the development of problem-solving attitudes and skills; a broader understanding of issues, increased tolerance and respect for differing points of view; skill in identifying policy questions; the application of social values to policy stances; the ability to express one's opinion with confidence and to engage in forceful dialogue with others. Role-play also advocates the triumph of reason over emotion in matters of political and social policy.

Finally, it nurtures the capacity for social involvement and arouses a desire for social action. The steps in role-playing as we have used it are few:

- (1) Select and develop a situation to role-play.
- (2) Set the stage and assign roles.
- (3) Prepare the observers.
- (4) Present the situation.
- (5) Discuss and evaluate the presentation.

Steps may, of course, vary depending on the design of the training session.

If the scenario is relatively simple, requiring little previous background, participants may volunteer from the audience to assume the various roles and improvise the dialogue. They may be given a short time in which to prepare themselves. After a 10- or 15-minute presentation, the actors and audience should discuss and evaluate the activity.

The same scenario may be enacted by two sets of volunteers. One demonstrating pitfalls to be avoided, the other as ideal a presentation as possible. The situation must have public issues or value conflicts involved to lend itself to this approach.

A moderately structured situation could have the presenter set the scenario, introduce the participants to the roles, procedures, types of decisions to be made, and objective. She also initiates the steps to be taken. But, the content of the discussions and the enactments are largely determined by the participants.

One chapter may be asked to produce the entire role-play or persons for one or two key roles may be secured in advance, especially if a current issue is to be explored. If the role-play activity is conducted by a chapter, members of the social action committee or the executive board may be asked to be the participants. Other participants may be recruited on-site. Roles may be assigned by the presenter, individuals volunteering for specific roles, or by the volunteer group, as a whole, forming a consensus on role assignments. In any case, once a soror has been designated for a particular role or character, she interprets it as she perceives it. In this respect, the role-play is spontaneous.

The presenter then conducts an abbreviated practice session to ensure that the actors have understood the directions and can carry out their roles. She should be a supportive advisor, offering (but not insisting on) advice when it is solicited, and perhaps submitting a few unsolicited suggestions.

As requirements of any story, role-play should have a beginning, middle, and closure. The actors should also be given a minimum length of time for their scenes.

Very little equipment is needed. Usually, a few chairs, a table, and space for actions are all that is required. The major tool is the problem situation. However, it is sometimes helpful to construct briefings for the various roles.

Essential explanations or details should be conveyed in the initial situation, either by a narrator or through dialogue. These details may include the events that led up to the beginning of the improvisation as well as time, place, etc.

Complications and/or suspense should be introduced early in the scenario. The actors need to show clearly that the characters want something (the objective) and fabricate obstacles that stand in the way of their reaching that goal. Complications can stem from an entity as simple as a clash between the objectives of the person involved.

Periodically, the role-play may be interrupted for feedback, evaluation or to clarify misconceptions if the presenter so desires.

The discussion that follows the enactment is significant. It may be conducted in groups as they prepare to meet with their legislators or in the overall setting.

Each step of the process has a specific purpose that contributes to the richness and focus of the learning activity. Together they ensure that a particular line of thinking is pursued throughout the complex of activities; that participants are prepared in their roles; goals for the role-play are identified; and that the discussion afterward is meaningful.

A demonstration of skills in interacting and communicating with our legislators, including both those who agree and those who disagree with our points of view; the clarification of issues; and the development of the most defensible position on them have been the thrust of role-playing.

Following is a guide for role-playing activities. But, as previously stated, it is a very versatile technique that can have many variations, be used in any number of ways, for a variety of purposes. Yours may be different.

### **Role-Playing Guide**

This guide assumes that you have prepared the scenario for the role-play before coming to the conference or workshop. It is a step-by-step guide for what transpires at the conference site after the players have been selected. Steps I and II take place in a participants' briefing meeting, and Steps III and IV occur during the conference presentation.

***Step I. Orientation:***

- Identify or introduce a real or hypothetical issue
- Make the problem explicit
- Have participants interpret problem story and explore the topic
- Develop a position on the issue

***Step II. Role selection and training:***

- Analyze roles
- Select role-players
- Restate roles
- Devise a strategy for presentation
- Explore conflict value and consequences
- Refine and qualify position
- Hold abbreviated practice session

***Step III. Prepare the observers – set stage for role-play activity***

***Step IV. Enact the scenario***

***Step V. Discuss and evaluate the enactment***

EXAMPLE FOR LEGISLATIVE ROLE-PLAY  
DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.  
ANY STATE SOCIAL ACTION CONFERENCE  
DATE  
OPERATION CONTACT

**Situation I**

You, a member of the ABC Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. are attending the Statewide Social Action Conference in your state capital. Sorors are preparing to meet with their Senator, Will H. Dew, to gain support for House Bill (HB) 94, an education funding bill.

**Participants**

- Conference attendees from the ABC Chapter
- Other conference participants from the ABC Chapter's senatorial district

**Background Information**

- The education bill passed both houses during the last legislative session.

- In a move to maintain a billion dollar surplus at all times, the Governor ordered a 2% across-the-board budgetary cut that amounted to an \$80,000,000 reduction in education funding.
- Representative Mary Jones and others introduced HB 94 in this session of the legislature to restore the necessary education funding. The bill has been passed by the House, but is still pending action in the Senate.

### Action Steps

#### Already Taken:

- Several issues that are to be considered during this legislative session have been identified.
- Issues were evaluated and a decision was made to focus on HB 94.
- HB 94 has been researched by sorors, individually.
- Soror Dorothy Smith has been assigned the task of gathering and summarizing information about Senator Dew's voting record, committee actions, speeches, press releases, and other public statements on HB 94 and other education funding measures.

#### Other Actions to be Taken:

- Develop and articulate position on issue.
- Report from Soror Smith regarding Senator Dew.
- Outline strategy for presentation.
- Select a spokesperson.

### State Social Action Conference

- Report from Soror Davis regarding appointment.
- Set time and place to gather, so that you may arrive at the Senator's office "as a body."

### **Situation II:**

Meeting with Senator Dew.

### Task:

To ensure a commitment of support for HB 94.

### Participants

- Delta Delegation from ABC Chapter
- Other residents of the district
- Senator Will H. Dew
- Senator Dew's receptionist

### Role descriptions

- Receptionist is unfriendly.
- Senator Dew is unbending in opposition to the bill.
- Delta-led group is persistent and polite.



# **MAXIMIZING YOUR VISIT TO AN ELECTED OFFICIAL**

From your local City Council to your Senators in Washington, DC, advocacy is a lot easier than most people think. A legislative visit is merely a meeting for you to tell your elected representative what you think about a certain issue or bill. Remember, these people work for YOU!

## **REQUESTING YOUR MEETING**

- Make your request in writing.
- Suggest specific times and dates for your meeting.
- State the issue(s) and legislation for discussion.
- Be sure to let them know that you are a constituent.

## **PREPARING FOR YOUR MEETING**

- Gather information on the issue(s) for discussion.
- Decide who will attend the meeting. (Limit the number to four or five.)
- Agree on the talking points.
- Plan your meeting.
- Conduct a dress rehearsal prior to the meeting. Know what will be discussed.

## **DURING THE MEETING**

- Keep it short! A good meeting will last 20 minutes or less. Remember, the person with whom you are meeting has a busy schedule.
- Start by thanking the elected official or staffer for his/her support of legislation on other Delta issues. You might also consider mentioning any personal, professional or political connections you may have.
- Stick to your talking points. Draft a position statement to keep you on point.
- Cite personal and/or local examples of the impact of the legislation.
- Ask the elected official or staffer to take a specific action and wait for his/her answer. Make every effort to get specific responses to your inquiries. Do not leave the meeting until your specific concerns are addressed or schedule another meeting in the district.
- Saying "I don't know" can be a smart political move. You need not be an expert on the topic you are discussing. It is permissible to tell the elected official that you will need to get information for them later. This can give you the chance to put your strongest arguments into their files and contact them again about the issue. However, set deadlines for follow-up.
- If the elected official has not taken a position on the issue, ask when you can expect him/her to make a decision. Follow up with the office around that time.

## **AFTER THE MEETING**

- Each person should send thank-you letters notes or postcards promptly.
- Follow up in a timely fashion with any requested materials and information.
- If the office needs more time to get information, set another deadline and follow up.

# LEGISLATIVE VISIT REPORT

Name of elected official: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and title of the staff person(s) with whom you met: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Washington, DC \_\_\_\_\_ State Capital Office \_\_\_\_\_ District Office \_\_\_\_\_

Issues/Bills Discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sentiments expressed by elected official/staff person(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up required: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Any additional information you think might be helpful: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source: Adapted from "How to Lobby" by the American Civil Liberties Union.

# SOCIAL ACTION ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be an effective tool for social action. A truly effective social action program cannot be built on social media alone, but as part of a larger strategy, social media can be a vital education resource, allowing a chapter to reach thousands of people with a single post or tweet.

Chapters and members should always be mindful that the **Delta Internet Guidelines** apply to all social media activity and should be followed at all times.

## **Social Media Best Practices and Reminders**

- DO share posts and tweets from Delta's social media page and partner organizations.
- DO create educational content that connects with Delta's Social Action priorities and resolutions.
- DO use Delta's social action campaign hashtags and create appropriate hashtags for issue campaigns undertaken by the chapter.
- DO remember who speaks for Delta (the National President & CEO) and be mindful about the messaging in your posts.
- DO NOT endorse candidates on chapter social media accounts.
- DO NOT endorse candidates in personal posts in the name of Delta.

## **SECTION III: SOCIAL ACTION EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**



Prepared by the Social Action Commission (SAC)  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **SECTION III: SOCIAL ACTION EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. became the first African-American Greek-letter organization to conduct a policy conference when it introduced Delta Days in the Nation's Capital in 1990. Today, Delta Sigma Theta conducts events to discuss important policy issues at the chapter, state, regional and national level every year.

The next section of the worktool features templates to help sorors organize social action events and activities. We encourage sorors to use these templates as a starting point but to bring their own creativity, relevancy and other factors to the table as they plan their events and activities.

#### **Delta Days in the Nation's Capital: History and Overview**

Many of the Sorority's long-standing initiatives have begun at the chapter, state or regional level. Delta Days in the Nation's Capital (DDNC) is a case in point. In 1984, the Louisiana Deltas (Southwest Region) held "Delta Red and White Day at the Legislature," believed to be the first such event. Soon thereafter, California Deltas (Farwest Region) led by the Sacramento Alumnae Chapter held "Delta Days at the State Capital" in March 1986.

In keeping with the changing times and needs, in 1989 the Eastern Region under the directorship of Gwendolyn E. Boyd began planning and implementing an annual legislative conference to expand its influence with members of Congress regarding public law and policy. In April 1990, the first DDNC was convened by the Eastern Region followed the next year by the second such event. Thereafter, the Commission assumed the responsibility for the DDNC.

The conference was "designed to increase members' involvement in the national public policymaking process," while maximizing the potential advocacy power and influence of more than 200,000 women.<sup>[1]</sup> Deltas from across the nation come together to advocate on behalf of those who have been stigmatized, marginalized, and rendered voiceless. As the event's importance began to take root at the local level, with each subsequent conference, the number of participants from all seven regions increased manyfold, and by default, the influence of the organization on public policy has followed this trajectory. Part of the increase in membership participation was due to the request that each chapter sponsor the attendance of at least one

member. It was suggested that the person be the Social Action Chair. This provided for attendance by members already interested in social action, who returned to their chapters better informed and prepared to implement sound social action programs.

Attendance grew beyond the chapter social action chairs, and included many Deltas who were not familiar with social action. It became clear to the Commission that additional training was needed to enhance the participation of members. Under Gwendolyn E. Boyd, the 22<sup>nd</sup> National President (2000-2004), an additional day at the beginning of the event was added to provide certification training (basic and advanced) which enabled participants to return to their local chapters and regions prepared to train Deltas in social action. This certification training proved to be not only a valuable part of the conference but a critical component in strengthening the social action dimension within the Sorority.

## **Conference Highlights**

Participants attending Delta Days in the Nations' Capital engage in an intense three- to four-day gathering where they receive information and direction on current political issues from policy-makers, congressional members and staff, members of the executive branch, leaders of other prominent national organizations, and Deltas in key positions. Issues discussed during the conference revolve around Delta's Five-Point Programmatic Thrust, and generally include legislation on health, education, civil rights, women's rights, human rights, economic empowerment, housing, political involvement, voting rights, and international involvement.

Attendees participate in workshops and forums aimed at enhancing their knowledge of the legislative process, building their confidence and advocacy skills in dealing with politicians, and augmenting their understanding of the complex components of key legislation before Congress. Because the annual conference meetings are scheduled to correspond with the legislative session, participants work in real-time and are kept informed through up-to-the-minute briefings on pertinent issues being debated on the floor of Congress.

Once participants are well prepared and well versed on the pending political issues, they engage in roundtable discussions and state caucuses to strategize and plan their meetings with their congressionally elected officials. It is at this juncture, when the informational, training, and strategic sessions have come to a close, that the ultimate purpose for the conference is executed.

Delta Days in the Nation's Capital culminates with each state delegation keeping scheduled appointments with its respective senators and representatives, or often with their legislative staffs, to discuss Delta's positions on key legislation, as outlined during the conference training sessions. It is a dramatic visual display, as hundreds of women dressed in red walk up and down the halls of Congress to meet with their legislators. It always draws attention and is a powerful sight to behold.

Once the political business has been concluded on the Hill, the moment is captured in a commemorative group photograph on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. Over time, this has become a treasured tradition.

## **Delta Youth Days**

Delta Days in the Nation's Capital was the impetus for the national push to have more regions and chapters host Delta Days at the State Capital (DDSC), and Delta Youth Days in the Nation's Capital and at the State Capital (Delta Youth Days). The Commission determined that an important part of taking an active role in our communities to affect change involved training the youth on the tools of social action.

Thus, Delta Youth Days in the Nation's Capital, and later at the state and local level were instituted. Delta Youth Days in the Nation's Capital was started to encourage "chapters and state social action committees to include African-American youth in raising their awareness of the political process used to address social issues."<sup>[iv]</sup> Each chapter was asked to sponsor at least one youth to come to Washington, DC for the program.

The first Delta Youth Days in the Nation's Capital was conducted simultaneously with DDNC in May 1992. A separate agenda was developed for the young activists. Presenters focused on what social action was, and why it was important for them to be involved. Participants were informed of the variety of ways to become agents of change in their own communities. Later, organizers realized the importance of the youth meeting with their elected officials — and the equal impact of members of Congress meeting with the young participants — and seeing the role Delta was playing in preparing our adolescents for their future role in society.

Delta Youth Days in the Nation's Capital developed a cadre of youth prepared to return home and educate their friends and families on actions they could take to make a difference in their communities. Many of them created programs within their schools that led to community activism. Another result was that the states added this component to their Delta Days at the State Capital, and local legislative calendars. Thus again, Delta was fulfilling its responsibility for activism by preparing the younger members of our society for their future leadership roles in the community.

Delta Days at the State Capital are not uniformly conducted throughout the states. However, the intent to advocate before state legislatures, provide workshops on the legislative process, conduct forums on critical issues and activate Delta's "Action Plan" is consistent. The conferences usually occur over one or two days, and focus on "the political empowerment of voting adults through visible involvement and interaction with elected officials."<sup>[v]</sup> Like DDNC, the finale of DDSC is the meetings with elected officials. Delta Days at the State Capital and Delta Youth Days are excellent additions to Delta's social action program, and successful spin-offs from Delta Days in the Nation's Capital.

As noted earlier, Delta Days has the most impact in engaging a larger number of Deltas in social action. Deltas across the country are now actively engaging their elected leadership on issues important to their state, their local community and the nation. Members now have a vehicle for voicing their views, for challenging their elected leadership, and for taking an active role in developing and implementing policy. Through the work of the Social Action Commission, Delta has begun to more completely fulfill the vision of the Founders, by taking an active role in the political and social issues across the national landscape. As has often been stated, “all politics is local.” Thus, Delta is using its national political platform and resources to make its mark—and make a difference nationally.

[i] Ibid., 3.

[ii] “Delta Days in the Nation’s Capital Action Plan” *Deltas Making a Difference: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, (Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., 2004), 1.

[iii] Ibid.

## HOW TO PLAN A DELTA DAYS CONFERENCE

Chapters may adapt the following information to plan their own “Delta Days” at the State Capital, City Council, School Board, Zoning Commission, Delta Youth Days, etc.

NOTE: A state capitol is the building where the state’s legislative business takes place. A state capital is the city that serves as a state’s seat of government.

Delta Days at the Capital is the activation of Delta’s national political awareness and involvement thrust, serving as a vehicle for advocacy and effecting social change and public policy. The goal is the political empowerment of sorors through visible involvement and interaction with elected and/or appointed officials. The voting strength of Delta’s members commands the attention and respect of elected and appointed officials.

The format for Delta Days can be as varied and innovative as the planners envision. Primary activities should include workshops on pending issues and the legislative process in preparation for visits with elected and appointed officials. When planning for a Delta Days, please consider the following steps (which are not in sequential order). They are to be used as a guide in your planning.

- Utilize the social action network (i.e., State Social Action Coordinator, chapter social action chairpersons) to plan Delta Days.
- Plan a one-day or two-day event. Develop a preliminary agenda.
- Set time in accordance with your state (county, city, etc.) legislative schedule.



- Develop topics to be discussed, including pending legislation, and other issues.
- Review Delta resolutions for Delta's position on the issues.
- Suggest presenters for workshop topics
- Prepare a budget
- Develop an evaluation form for participants.
- Schedule appointments with legislators and/or their staffs.
- Other suggested activities
  - Workshop on coalition building
  - Reception
- Send thank-you letters to presenters.

### **GETTING STARTED**

- A. Convene 10-15 motivated, resourceful, enthusiastic members.
- B. Brainstorm about a date, place, workshop topics, network opportunities, funding sources, and Capitol contacts (legislators, aides, board members, state employees familiar with Delta.)
- C. Assign tasks to follow up brainstorming with facts and figures needed to establish budget and fees for items such as hotel or other space; printing and mailing costs; food costs for luncheons, receptions, etc. NOTE: Consult with a legislator as well as Delta members. Avoid days when the legislature does not meet or days near the end of the session. Delta Day(s) must be when the decision makers are in their offices at the Capitol.
- D. When planning a Delta Youth Days, you must consult with the regional and/or chapter risk management representatives. They should be an integral part of the planning committee. Be flexible in registering the youth to participate. The Delta Youth Days should be open for two levels of participation. Participants may register for the Delta Youth Days only or for the entire Delta Days at the State Capital program
- E. Set date for next meeting to make specific plans and budget.

### **COST-CUTTING RESOURCES**

- A. Groups can be convinced that it is in their best interest to co-sponsor or underwrite a reception, coffee hour or tea. These events do not have to be elaborate. They are simply opportunities for participants to interact with speakers, legislators, staff members, lobbyists, etc.

Such groups are State Councils, legislators up for re-election, or having large constituencies where there are Delta chapters; corporations specializing in products used by women; foundations interested in encouraging women to vote; other women's groups (e.g., Junior League, League of Women Voters, unions, and political parties).

- B. Ads can be sold for a souvenir program to cover printing costs.
- C. If a legislator hosts a reception, the invitation can be a letter over his or her signature.
- D. Large chapters or the local chapter may cover the expenses for some aspect of the conference (e.g., on-site transportation, document copying, registration kits, evaluation forms, centerpieces for a food function).
- E. If approached by constituents, elected officials and their staff persons can be of great assistance with staffing workshops, securing meeting space, notifying colleagues of your events and securing sponsors for receptions.

REMEMBER: Elected officials want your support, your good will, and your votes. These items can be as negotiable as cash in the world of politics.

## **PROTOCOL**

### **A. Pre-conference Protocol**

- Contact governor, legislators and other key people as soon as possible.
- Advise the site staff (hotel/convention center) regarding the space and equipment needed.
- Mail confirmation letters to program participants only.
- Involve chapter social action chairs in preparing the chapter members for meeting with their representatives (e.g., providing names of officials; writing letters requesting appointments; distributing pertinent materials from the Social Action Commission's "How To" Handbook; and role-playing the visit).
- Send the program to registered participants in advance of the conference.
- Keep your regional director, regional/state social action coordinators and regional members of the National Social Action Commission informed.

## B. On-Site Protocol

- Assign a planning committee member to each session as coordinator for that particular event. Make sure they distribute and collect evaluations for each session.
- Begin all activities **ON TIME**.
- Arrange for special guests and Delta Executive Board members to be picked up at the airport.
- Assign hostesses for special guests and board members to see that they know the exact, time and places of their participation.
- Advise all participants to wear red and white for the Delta Day(s) activity. It is important that the decision makers have a graphic memory of the number of votes influenced by members of Delta Sigma Theta. The fact that a large number of people will take time out from their employment to participate in the Delta Day(s) activity to become familiar with the lawmaking process indicates to elected officials that these people are willing to make an important sacrifice to advance their concerns.
- Assign the responsibility of collecting materials, handouts, and manuscripts from each session, to be filed for future reference.

## C. Post Conference

- Send thank-you letters promptly to the appropriate legislative offices, officials and staff persons; and to conference presenters, cooperating chapters, and special guests.
- Develop pictures of sorors with their respective legislators and mail with news release to chapters. Suggest that these items be sent to the local papers and social media.
- Collect and summarize the evaluations.
- Send complete report and clipping to National Headquarters.
- Set date for the next Delta Days at the Capital. Reserve space and time with food vendors and announce the date.

NOTE: While as individuals we must take turns attending this conference, it is extremely important to our communities that a Delta Delegation meets with elected officials yearly in the state capitals! Decision makers must be kept aware of our concerns. Visiting your lawmaker regularly is a proven mechanism to gain their attention. Sorors and chapters in the States of Oregon, Washington and California are now sought out for opinions of proposed legislation, for

input to potential candidates for positions on state committees. Our black elected officials have been effusive in encouraging us to continue our engagement with our elected officials.

### **FORMAT**

- A. After allowing reasonable time for the necessary research, the planning team should convene a second time to make a budget and specific plans.
- B. Translate your ideas into topics for workshops and large group sessions. Keep in mind your theme. Example: In thinking about political empowerment, consider topics dealing with the legislative process and its pressure points: “How to Lobby for a Bill”; “How to Get Appointed to Commissions”; “Government Funding for Community-Based Projects”; “How to Win Elected Offices”; etc.
- C. Include a debriefing session where participants may share their experiences while the incidents are fresh in their minds.

### **TIMELINE AND ACTION PLAN**

In addition to producing a format, there should be two other outcomes of the second planning meeting: an action plan and a timeline. The timeline and plan should include a strategy for circulating registration forms to chapters and the public and drafting and distributing news releases and letters to government officials, moderators and facilitators. Planners should also hire or identify photographers for the event and assign duties to event coordinators and hostesses.

### **STAFFING THE PROGRAM**

- A. Look for panelists/presenters from your legislator’s legislative aides; state government; private industry; corporations; and your Delta membership.
- B. Select panelists/presenters based on their:
  - Background and experience about the subject matter.
  - Professional expertise in area: community-state-national levels.
  - Grassroots expertise in area: community-state-national levels.
- C. Utilize the expertise within your chapters by choosing moderators, facilitators and recorders from the membership.

### **ISSUE-ORIENTED SESSIONS AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES**

Forums, Food Functions — These networking opportunities can be opened to the public and will attract media attention if a popular host is invited, e.g., newspaper editor, talk show host, news anchor, etc. Also, a controversial topic forum will attract media attention, e.g., “The Church and Social Action”; “Your Future and the Census”; “Women and Minorities in the Media”; “Woman Power as Voting Power.”

### **VISITING ELECTED OFFICIALS**

- A. The published format should have sufficient time set aside for visiting the legislators, touring the Capitol and attending a portion of the legislative session.
- B. Each chapter should make an appointment to visit with elected officials from their districts to acquaint them with Delta; to find ways in which Delta and the official may work together, to discuss issues important to the community in which the chapter is located; and to invite them to visit a Delta program or project, or speak to the chapter, etc. (NOTE: Delta is non-partisan. See that ALL legislators are contacted regardless of party affiliation. Also avoid being top heavy with officials from one party if possible.)

## **SECTION IV: VOTER REGISTRATION, EDUCATION AND MOBILIZATION**

## INTRODUCTION

### SECTION IV: VOTER REGISTRATION, EDUCATION AND MOBILIZATION

As sorors of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., our commitment to civic engagement is clear. Chapters are charged to implement comprehensive voter registration, education and mobilization efforts. This information is being provided as a guide to assist chapters. The resources and links are tools; however, chapters should always consult their state and local Board of Elections for the most comprehensive, up-to-date information. Also remember that as a non-partisan organization, we do not promote any particular party or endorse candidates.

#### VOTER REGISTRATION

##### Know Your State's Rules on Voter Registration

Voter registration rules and requirements differ by state. As you work to conduct voter registration, be sure you know the requirements in your state.

**Identify** your state's requirements for conducting a voter registration drive. Be sure you know the answers to the following questions so you can conduct your voter registration activities:

- *Is there a required training for volunteers to be able to register voters?*
- *What is the age requirement for volunteers registering people to vote?*
- *How must registration forms be submitted to election officials?*
- *What are the applicable deadlines for registering and when forms must be received by election officials?*

#### EARLY VOTING AND ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Many states allow citizens to vote early or by absentee ballot. It is important that you understand these powerful voting options for your community. Candidates can win elections without run-offs with a strategic early/absentee voting strategy in many states. In order to vote early or by absentee, you must know the dates and locations for early/absentee voting in your area.

## **Early Voting Strategy**

The following is a strategic early voting strategy that can be used to help increase voter turnout:

1. Select an early-voting day;
2. Organize large numbers of voters;
3. Find a meeting location for the group of voters;
4. As a group, go to the polls and early-vote; and
5. Text, tweet, and email the amount of people in your group that voted early: *"Today, 150 people voted early in Jefferson County. Vote today and avoid long lines on Election Day!"*

## **VOTER EDUCATION**

**Help your community be prepared for Election Day.**

**Prepare** voters by ensuring they know the following things for Election Day:

1. What offices are on the ballot?
2. What are the ballot initiatives, referendums, or propositions on the ballot?
3. How do you find your polling place?
4. What times are the polls open?
5. Does your state have early voting?
6. Who can vote by absentee ballot and how?

**Distribute** the contact information for the election protection coalition throughout the community. The coalition is available to provide assistance with any questions, concerns or problems on Election Day.

## **VOTER MOBILIZATION**

**Your vote is your voice! Getting voters to the polls is key.**

**Election Protection Contact Information:**

1-866-OUR-VOTE (687-8683 @866ourVote, and facebook.com/866OurVote).

**RESOURCE:** Election Protection Coalition <http://866ourvote.org/>

**Engage** with the community through candidate forums, issue forums and other opportunities designed to educate voters. Many organizations such as local Urban League chapters, NAACP branches and the League of Women Voters host events and create voter guides that can be good resources.

There are many election activities throughout the community that chapters can participate in or host. We are encouraging chapters to participate at every point of the election process before and during Election Day.



**Contact** family, friends and community members to make sure they are prepared for the polls, whether its absentee voting, early voting or Election Day voting.

- Each soror should reach out to 13 friends and family to ensure that they are prepared to vote: registered to vote, educated about issues/candidates, know their poll locations, and voting on Election Day.
- Sorors should host a Get Out The Vote community rally in their neighborhood to help educate and prepare their neighbors to vote.
- Sorors should attend political events and local strategy sessions to ensure election information is being distributed throughout the community.

**Mobilize** community members to get to the polls! Use a variety of tactics to encourage people to the polls on Election Day. Some of the best practices chapters have employed include:

- Transport people to the polls. This requires securing the right liability insurance or partnering with another organization that has already made the appropriate legal arrangements to transport people to the polls.
- Support local churches efforts. For early voting and Election Day, churches often organize **“Souls to the Polls”** efforts — the church goes to the polls together and vote.
- Organize a neighborhood group to meet up and walk to the polls – **“Stroll to the Polls.”**
- **“Corner Waving”** is a fun election activity. A team of volunteers are strategically placed on street corners waving election signs to remind people to vote or to provide important election information.
- Support local NAACP and others phone-banking efforts to encourage people to go to the polls and vote.
- Stay in contact with people you registered to vote and remind them to vote.

## **VOTER PROTECTION**

**Defend our right to vote. Protect the integrity of our vote.**

There are opportunities to support the community through voter protection activities on Election Day.

**Volunteer** to work in some voter protection capacity on Election Day.

- Sign up to be a poll captain, worker or election monitor in your area. Contact your local Board of Election to find out how.

- Sorors who are attorneys can volunteer with the Election Protection Coalition's 866-OUR-VOTE helpline or to work in the field.
- Ensure you report all issues or concerns that come to your attention on Election Day to the 866-OUR-VOTE hotline. If you see (or hear of) something, say something.

**RESOURCE:** Information on Election Protection Activities <http://866ourvote.org>

## **SUPPORTING CANDIDATES**

The National Social Action Commission has been encouraging sorors to run for elected office and **WIN**.

Below are some ways to support these candidates.

### **AS INDIVIDUALS**

You as an individual have the right to support sorors running for elected office by volunteering, giving a donation, and voting for any candidate of your choice.

As individuals can come together to host a fundraising event. Below are the steps to hosting a "Crimson and Cream Fundraiser."

### ***Crimson and Cream Fundraiser***

#### **1. Form a Host Committee**

The host committee can be comprised of any number of members deemed necessary for a successful event. The host committee should:  
Find a location, time, and date for event; and  
Create an invitation to send out to their friends and network.

#### **2. The fundraiser program:**

Create an event program to allow each of the candidates and opportunity to give a quick 90-second stump speech.  
"Questions and Answers" should be allowed after the stump speeches.

#### **3. The fundraiser logistics:**

The fundraiser participants should be given an envelope for their donations at the door of the event.  
An envelope should be provided for each candidate.

The participants should decide their donation amount and select the candidates that they would like to support.

All donations collected will be distributed to the candidates at the end of the Crimson and Cream fundraiser.

**Remember:** *You may not use Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. name, symbols or trademarks in any way when hosting a Crimson and Cream Fundraiser. These events are conducted as individuals and not as members of the sorority. Such fundraisers are not activities of a chapter or the Sorority. In addition, you can't wear your letters to a political fundraiser. Please be mindful not to be photographed in your letters with a candidate. This act might be viewed as an endorsement and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. cannot endorse candidates.*

### **AS A CHAPTER**

While chapters cannot endorse candidates, they can help candidates in other ways:

**Congratulatory Announcements** — Chapters can make congratulatory announcements of a soror's candidacy.

For example: ***"Congratulations to Soror Brown for running for Probate Judge. For more information, visit [www.brownforjudge.com](http://www.brownforjudge.com)."***

### **Candidate Forum**

We encourage chapters to host a candidate forum in their community. A candidate forum is great way to interact directly with the candidate to gain a better understanding of his/her position on various issues.

To host a candidate forum, you should:

- Confirm a date and time at a good centralized location for the event.
- Create a planning committee to invite ALL candidates to participate and to handle the event logistics.
- The committee should decide if they are going to allow candidate representatives to participate on the candidate's behalf, if the candidate is not available the day of the event.
- Create promotional materials: flyers, social media and other materials to promote the event and the confirmed candidates.
- Find a moderator for the event. The moderator will develop questions to ask each candidate. (Usually, the candidate wants the questions in advance to prepare their answers before the event.) "Questions and Answers" from the audience — The moderator should allow time for the audience to ask questions near the end of the event.

### **Other Candidate Forum Tips:**

- On the day of the event, a holding room for the candidates is recommended. A holding room will provide a private place for candidates to come and collect themselves before the forum.
- It is always a nice gesture to have the planning committee greet their guests and provide them with an overview of the event, program flow, introduction to the moderator, and to answer any final questions.
- It is always good to provide comfortable chairs for each candidate along with a bottle of water.
- At the end of the event, please remember to thank everyone for coming out, the candidates, and the planning committee.
- Finally, **Remind Everyone to Get Out and Vote!**

## **OTHER HELPFUL ELECTION RESOURCES**

Provided below are some highly useful resources and information about elections in the United States from voter registration, sample ballots, political polls, political articles and much more.

### **NATIONAL ELECTION RESOURCES**

#### ***CNN Politics***

***<http://www.cnn.com/POLITICS/>***

The politics page from the popular cable news channel. Provides latest news and video related to U.S. politics and upcoming elections.

#### ***C-SPAN***

***<http://www.c-span.org/>***

Videos on events and programs related to upcoming elections covered by C-SPAN, "a private, nonprofit company, created in 1979 by the cable television industry as a public service to provide public access to the political process."

#### ***Politics—FoxNews.com***

***<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/>***

The politics page from the popular cable news channel. Provides latest news and video related to U.S. politics and upcoming elections.

#### ***NBC Politics on NBCNEWS.com***

***<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/>***

The politics page from NBCNEWS.com. Provides latest news and video related to U.S. politics and upcoming elections as well as "First Read" ("news and analysis from the NBC News Political Unit").

***New York Times—Politics***

***<https://www.nytimes.com/section/politics>***

The Politics page of the New York Times newspaper provides nationwide coverage and information on upcoming elections.

***NPR: Politics***

***<http://www.npr.org/sections/politics/>***

This is the politics page for National Public Radio (NPR).

***Other Resources with an African-American Perspective***

[www.blavity.com](http://www.blavity.com), [www.thegrio.com](http://www.thegrio.com), [www.theroot.com](http://www.theroot.com), [www.theundefeated.com](http://www.theundefeated.com),  
[www.blackenterprise.com](http://www.blackenterprise.com), [www.atlantablackstar.com](http://www.atlantablackstar.com), [www.huffpost.com](http://www.huffpost.com), [www.newsone.com](http://www.newsone.com),  
[www.ebony.com](http://www.ebony.com), [www.essence.com](http://www.essence.com), [www.blackgirlz.com](http://www.blackgirlz.com), [www.blackprwire.com](http://www.blackprwire.com).

**LOCAL AND STATE ELECTION RESOURCES*****C-SPAN—Election Guide***

***<http://www3.capwiz.com/c-span/e4/>***

Scroll down this webpage from C-SPAN to find a clickable map that will take you to links and information on your federal, state, and local candidates and issues, as well as general voter information. Enter your zip code for even faster results.

***Follow the Money: The National Institute on Money in State Politics***

***<http://www.followthemoney.org/>***

"Money in state politics plays a pivotal role in shaping public policy in individual states and across the nation. The nonpartisan Institute on Money in State Politics tracks contributions in all 50 states and makes this data easily searchable online."

***The League of Women Voters - VOTE411.org***

***<http://www.vote411.org>***

Search state by state to locate links to city, county, and state government election information webpages.

***National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS)***

***<http://www.nass.org/>***

NASS is a "non-partisan organization for public officials." The site contains information about voting registration, new legislation, and state-by-state news.

***National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)***

***<https://www.naACP.org/campaigns/voterhelp/>***

The NAACP is a frontline advocate committed to raising awareness for political, educational, social and economic equality for communities of color in the electoral and legislative process.

### Official State Government Election Websites

State	Website
Alabama	<a href="https://www.sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes">https://www.sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes</a>
Alaska	<a href="http://www.elections.alaska.gov/">http://www.elections.alaska.gov/</a>
American Samoa	<a href="https://www.americansamoa.gov/">https://www.americansamoa.gov/</a>
Arizona	<a href="https://azsos.gov/elections">https://azsos.gov/elections</a>
Arkansas	<a href="http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/elections/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/elections/Pages/default.aspx</a>
California	<a href="http://www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov/">http://www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov/</a>
Colorado	<a href="http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/main.htm">http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/main.htm</a>
Connecticut	<a href="https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Common-Elements/V5-Template---Redesign/Elections--Voting--Home-Page">https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Common-Elements/V5-Template---Redesign/Elections--Voting--Home-Page</a>
Delaware	<a href="http://elections.delaware.gov/">http://elections.delaware.gov/</a>
District of Columbia	<a href="https://dc.gov/">https://dc.gov/</a>
Florida	<a href="https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/">https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/</a>

<b>Georgia</b>	<a href="http://www.sos.ga.gov/elections/"><u>http://www.sos.ga.gov/elections/</u></a>
<b>Guam</b>	<a href="http://www.guam.gov"><u>www.guam.gov</u></a>
<b>Hawaii</b>	<a href="http://hawaii.gov/elections/"><u>http://hawaii.gov/elections/</u></a>
<b>Idaho</b>	<a href="http://www.idahovotes.gov/"><u>http://www.idahovotes.gov/</u></a>
<b>Illinois</b>	<a href="http://www.elections.il.gov/"><u>http://www.elections.il.gov/</u></a>
<b>Indiana</b>	<a href="http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/2395.htm"><u>http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/2395.htm</u></a>
<b>Iowa</b>	<a href="http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/"><u>http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/</u></a>
<b>Kansas</b>	<a href="https://sos.kansas.gov/elections/"><u>https://sos.kansas.gov/elections/</u></a>
<b>Kentucky</b>	<a href="http://www.elect.ky.gov/"><u>http://www.elect.ky.gov/</u></a>
<b>Louisiana</b>	<a href="https://www.sos.la.gov/ElectionsAndVoting/Pages/default.aspx"><u>https://www.sos.la.gov/ElectionsAndVoting/Pages/default.aspx</u></a>
<b>Maine</b>	<a href="http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming.html"><u>http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming.html</u></a>
<b>Maryland</b>	<a href="http://www.elections.state.md.us/"><u>http://www.elections.state.md.us/</u></a>

<b>Massachusetts</b>	<a href="http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/"><u>http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/</u></a>
<b>Michigan</b>	<a href="http://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,1607,7-127-1633---,00.html"><u>http://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,1607,7-127-1633---,00.html</u></a>
<b>Minnesota</b>	<a href="http://www.sos.state.mn.us/index.aspx?page=4"><u>http://www.sos.state.mn.us/index.aspx?page=4</u></a>
<b>Mississippi</b>	<a href="http://www.sos.ms.gov/elections-voting/pages/default.aspx"><u>http://www.sos.ms.gov/elections-voting/pages/default.aspx</u></a>
<b>Missouri</b>	<a href="http://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/"><u>http://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/</u></a>
<b>Montana</b>	<a href="http://sos.mt.gov/elections/"><u>http://sos.mt.gov/elections/</u></a>
<b>Nebraska</b>	<a href="http://www.sos.ne.gov/dyindex.html"><u>http://www.sos.ne.gov/dyindex.html</u></a>
<b>Nevada</b>	<a href="http://nvsos.gov/index.aspx?page=3"><u>http://nvsos.gov/index.aspx?page=3</u></a>
<b>New Hampshire</b>	<a href="http://sos.nh.gov/"><u>http://sos.nh.gov/</u></a>
<b>New Jersey</b>	<a href="http://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/"><u>http://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/</u></a>
<b>New Mexico</b>	<a href="http://www.sos.state.nm.us/"><u>http://www.sos.state.nm.us/</u></a>
<b>New York</b>	<a href="http://www.elections.ny.gov/"><u>http://www.elections.ny.gov/</u></a>



<b>North Carolina</b>	<a href="https://www.ncsbe.gov/index.html">https://www.ncsbe.gov/index.html</a>
<b>North Dakota</b>	<a href="http://www.nd.gov/sos/electvote/">http://www.nd.gov/sos/electvote/</a>
<b>Ohio</b>	<a href="http://www.sos.state.oh.us/elections.aspx">http://www.sos.state.oh.us/elections.aspx</a>
<b>Oklahoma</b>	<a href="http://www.ok.gov/elections/">http://www.ok.gov/elections/</a>
<b>Oregon</b>	<a href="http://www.sos.state.or.us/elections/">http://www.sos.state.or.us/elections/</a>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<a href="https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/Pages/default.aspx">https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/Pages/default.aspx</a>
<b>Puerto Rico</b>	<a href="http://prfaa.pr.gov/">http://prfaa.pr.gov/</a>
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<a href="http://sos.ri.gov/">http://sos.ri.gov/</a>
<b>South Carolina</b>	<a href="http://www.scvotes.org/">http://www.scvotes.org/</a>
<b>South Dakota</b>	<a href="https://sdsos.gov/default.aspx">https://sdsos.gov/default.aspx</a>
<b>Tennessee</b>	<a href="http://state.tn.us/sos/election/">http://state.tn.us/sos/election/</a>
<b>Texas</b>	<a href="http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/">http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/</a>

Utah	<a href="http://vote.utah.gov/">http://vote.utah.gov/</a>
Vermont	<a href="https://www.sec.state.vt.us/elections.aspx">https://www.sec.state.vt.us/elections.aspx</a>
Virginia	<a href="https://www.elections.virginia.gov/">https://www.elections.virginia.gov/</a>
Virgin Islands	<a href="https://www.vi.gov/">https://www.vi.gov/</a>
Washington	<a href="http://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/Default.aspx">http://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/Default.aspx</a>
West Virginia	<a href="http://www.sos.wv.gov/elections/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.sos.wv.gov/elections/Pages/default.aspx</a>
Wisconsin	<a href="http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting">http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting</a>
Wyoming	<a href="http://soswy.state.wy.us/Elections/Elections.aspx">http://soswy.state.wy.us/Elections/Elections.aspx</a>

## OFFICIAL POLITICAL PARTY SITES

- Democratic Party: <http://www.democrats.org>
- Democratic Socialists of America: <http://www.dsausa.org>
- Green Party: <http://www.gp.org>
- Libertarian Party: <http://www.lp.org>
- Reform Party: <http://www.reformparty.org>
- Republican Party: <http://www.gop.com>
- Tea Party: <http://www.teapartypatriots.org/>

## **CANDIDATES AND ISSUES**

### ***Congress.org***

***<http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home>***

This is NOT the homepage of the United States Congress, but it is a great guide to the Congress with information on legislative issues.

### ***FactCheck.org***

***<http://factcheck.org>***

Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania maintains out this website to monitor the factual accuracy of statements made by and advertisements on behalf of major U.S. political figures.

### ***Opensecrets.org***

***<http://www.opensecrets.org/>***

Sponsored by The Center for Responsive Politics and dedicated to educating the public about campaign finances, visitors can learn about campaign finance law or look up contributors to political campaigns.

### ***MAPLight.org***

***<http://maplight.org/>***

"MAPLight.org, a nonprofit, non-partisan research organization, provides citizens and journalists the transparency tools to shine a light on the influence of money on politics." Find out how much one or more legislators' voting records on bills corresponds to how much money they received from campaign contributors who supported or opposed those bills.

### ***PolitiFact.com***

***<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/>***

Reporters and researchers from the St. Petersburg Times and Congressional Quarterly "analyze the candidates' speeches, TV ads and interviews and determine whether the claims are accurate."

### ***PollingReport.com***

***<http://www.pollingreport.com/>***

This is an excellent collection of major poll results. Visitors can search for various issues and get information on the public opinion polls taken regarding the issue.

### ***Project Vote Smart***

***<http://www.votesmart.org/>***

Provides information for voters on political leaders, their positions on issues, and campaign finance, and encourages active participation in democratic processes through voting.

## **VOTER INFORMATION RESOURCES**

### ***Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE)***

***[http://www.civicyouth.org/?page\\_id=132/](http://www.civicyouth.org/?page_id=132/)***

This is the website for CIRCLE, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement. CIRCLE is a nonpartisan research center that focuses on young people in the United States, especially those who are marginalized or disadvantaged in political life.

### ***Center for Voting and Democracy***

***<http://www.fairvote.org/>***

FairVote encourages "education, research, analysis, and organization" to get people to the polls. It advocates for inclusiveness and the democratic process and provides information on fair voting and representation.

### ***LULAC***

***<http://lulac.org/programs/civic/>***

This link is to the League of United Latin American Citizens. The LULAC Advocacy site has information on organizing for civic participation for the Hispanic community, voter registration and voting FAQs, and information on Latino demographics.

### ***The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC)***

***<http://www.eac.gov/default.aspx>***

The EAC is an "independent, bipartisan commission created by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002... It issues guidance about HAVA, adopts voluntary voting system guidelines, audits the use of HAVA funds, and provides best practices and resources to election officials throughout the nation." The website provides background material, information for election officials and voters, documents on voting system certification, reports, and related resources. Background documents also available in Spanish.

## **VOTING ABROAD**

U.S. citizens resident abroad typically are eligible to vote in Presidential and Congressional elections. If you were born abroad to a U.S. citizen parent, and never lived in the United States, you may be entitled to vote in the state in which your American parent last lived. Check with the election authorities in that state to determine your status. It does not matter how long you have been living abroad, whether you ever intend to return to the United States, whether you have voted before, or whether you maintain a residence in the United States. However, in order to vote you have to be registered. To register to vote, you need to use the last residential address where you lived in the United States. This is NOT where you will receive your absentee ballot, however, this is the address you need to register as a U.S. voter because it determines your voting district. Many states require you to be registered at least a month before Election Day.

To register to vote, voters can download the Voter Registration and Absentee Ballot Request Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) from [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov). Most states allow our military to either fill out their FPCA and submit it electronically, or they may mail in their form. However, you must consider the delivery time. So, early mailing is suggested. If a voter sends a FPCA in too late, then the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) can be requested as an emergency measure. (The FWAB is also available on the FVAP website.) In some states, the FWAB also can be used as a voter registration form and ballot.

**If you have never lived in the US, you still may be able to register to vote.**

Thirty-seven (37) states and the District of Columbia extend voting rights to the children of former residents who have never resided in the United States. Unfortunately, thirteen (13) states do not extend voting rights to citizens who have never lived in the United States. U.S. citizens living abroad should register and vote in the state where they last resided, or in the state in which their parents last resided if permitted by the law of that state.

Some states will require photo identification to be mailed along with absentee ballots. To better understand the requirements of each state and to help minimize possible voter registration and balloting issues, overseas voters should consult the website of the Secretary of State for the state in which they plan to vote.

The Americans Abroad Caucus consists of members of the House of Representatives especially attuned to the problems of American citizens living outside the United States. The Caucus collectively and members individually have been instrumental in bringing several issues to the attention of other House members, such as:

- Higher Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) thresholds for citizens living abroad and possible "same country exemption;"
- Improving "streamlined" procedures for non-filers living abroad;
- Increasing safeguards for passport denial because of unpaid taxes;
- Introducing legislation for a commission to study how federal laws affect Americans abroad;
- Easing restrictions on absentee voting for military and overseas civilians;
- Calling for hearings on access to basic banking services for Americans overseas;
- Requesting a census of Americans abroad; and
- Making House members' websites more user-friendly for overseas constituents.



# **SOCIAL ACTION** WORKTOOL

**A Guide For Implementing Effective Social Action Projects And Activities**

Prepared by the Social Action Commission (SAC)

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc

## **SECTION V: RESOLUTIONS**

## INTRODUCTION

### SECTION V: RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions project an image of the Sorority, signaling to others the public interest concerns deemed important to the membership. Resolutions are used to direct the organization's social action agenda, and to guide advocacy and coalition activities, program initiation and revision, and resource allocation. As such, the Sorority has adopted a formal process for the consideration and adoption of resolutions.

Proposed resolutions are initiated by chapters, regional or state social action committees, or the National Social Action Commission. The Commission reviews all resolutions submitted for consideration at the National Convention and publishes *proposed* resolutions in the Convention Workbook. The formal report of the Resolutions Committee is presented for deliberation and adoption at the Convention.

Social action committee chairpersons should refer to the Codification of Resolutions when selecting issues and developing strategies for addressing issues of concern to Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

## HOW TO PREPARE EFFECTIVE RESOLUTIONS

- Identify the topic or issue to be brought to the attention of the Sorority.
- Determine whether the Sorority has taken a position on the topic or issue, and if so, whether the position needs to be updated or refined. (Refer to the Codification of Resolutions.)
- Research the topic or issue thoroughly. Analyze and summarize relevant facts. Review as many *credible* sources as possible when collecting information. Credible sources include, but are not limited to, articles from professional journals, publications of advocacy

or government organizations, and expert testimony presented at public hearings. To the extent practical, verify information.

- Outline supporting and opposing viewpoints.
- Draft the resolution, using the Sorority's format for resolutions.
- Review the resolution for faulty logic, incorrect facts, repetition, poor organization, language, appropriateness, etc.
- Present a draft to the chapter for comment and approval. Make final revisions.
- Send the proposed resolution, along with copies of your sources, to the Resolutions Committee at National Headquarters. Be advised that resolutions not accompanied by documentation will be returned to the chapter. The deadline for the acceptance of proposed resolutions for consideration at National Convention is April 15 of the National Convention year.

## RESOLUTION FORMAT

WHEREAS, (statement of the problem)  
(use data and limit to five clauses)

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:  
(proposed action to be taken by the Sorority)  
(use measurable and achievable activities)

If more than one proposal for action is recommended, use introductory language such as "BE IT FURTHER (or ALSO) RESOLVED" (*Use the following worksheet*)



DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.  
RESOLUTION WORKSHEET

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Proposed Descriptive Title for Resolution)

Premise or Postulate

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_; and

Fact

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_; and

Fact

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_; and

Specific Action Recommended

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter for presentation at the (Year) National Convention.

## EXAMPLE OF A RESOLUTION

### A Resolution on African-American Participation in U.S. Census 2010

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census is mandated by the Constitution of the United States of America to be mandated every 10 years; and

WHEREAS, census data is used to distribute congressional seats to states; and

WHEREAS, more than \$300 billion in federal funds is awarded to states and communities based on census data; and

WHEREAS, census data guides local decision-makers in important community planning efforts, including locations for schools, roads, hospitals, child-care and senior citizen centers, etc.; and

WHEREAS, community planners and governments rely on census data to determine where there is the most need for additional social services and who gets needed funding, such as community development block grants; and

WHEREAS, the 2010 Census will create hundreds of thousands of temporary jobs across the nation; and

WHEREAS, historically African Americans have been underrepresented in census data; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will work diligently to make certain that every effort is made to ensure that African Americans are fully included in the census process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Delta chapters and members will refer applicants for census jobs, include census information at chapter meetings, post on bulletin boards and in newsletters, and provide space for census activities at chapter meeting sites in communities and on college/university campuses; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that chapters will use their influence to convey the importance of the census, particularly to community members in economically and resource-challenged areas.

*Submitted by: the National Social Action Commission for consideration during the 2008 National Convention.*

# **Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Codified Resolutions**

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# CIVIL RIGHTS

## 1. COMBATING VOTER SUPPRESSION

WHEREAS, although voting is a constitutionally-protected right for American citizens, African-American voters have been systematically disenfranchised by voter suppression laws; and

WHEREAS, voter ID laws, restrictions on voter registration, purging of voter rolls, and cuts to early voting are the latest tactics to suppress the voting rights of historically disenfranchised groups, including African-Americans, the elderly, students, and people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, local elections offices across the nation continue to reduce the hours for early voting in areas of high minority populations and fail to have adequate voting machines or forms for voters when issues arise at polling places. The voting facilities also are often ill-equipped to handle the number of senior or disabled voters; and

WHEREAS, increasingly, state legislatures have passed laws requiring people to show government issued photo identification when they go to the polls. Supporters of voter ID laws purport they are necessary to protect against voter fraud. However, instances of voter fraud are rare and voter ID laws could potentially reduce turnout among the elderly, poor and some racial minorities, who are less likely to have driver's licenses or passports and who might also find it harder to miss work or lose pay to obtain proper ID. In North Carolina, for example, implementation of these voter identification requirements will penalize students at private institutions and are estimated to cost taxpayers upward of 3.7 million dollars; and

WHEREAS, voter suppression laws often target college students. Voter suppression efforts in North Carolina threaten to severely decrease the level of voter participation among college students and other vulnerable populations like senior citizens, low income citizens and people of color. It should be noted that North Carolina has the largest number (11) of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in any single state and students of these HBCUs and majority colleges were highly participatory in the civil rights movement that created an environment that led to the development and passage of the Voting Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, The North Carolina legislature has presented several bills that will adversely impact students and penalize their families by eliminating tax credits given to parents if their child registers to vote at an address other than the parent's home; essentially a \$2,500 poll tax, although in 1979, the Supreme Court ruled that college students have the right to register and vote where they attend school, yet these new bills would penalize families of students exercising this right, likely leading to decreased student voter participation, which on average is lower than the general population.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. urges Congress to vigorously enforce our voting rights laws instead of making them tools of partisan political agendas. We also ask members of Congress to oppose laws that require identification in order

to vote or register to vote, which create discriminatory barriers to the right to vote and disenfranchise many eligible voters, students and the elderly. We also call on Congress to oppose tactics which purge eligible voters from voter rolls; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that all chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. engage communities, governmental entities and nonprofit organizations to combat voter suppression and voter identification requirements and include opposition to voter suppression in activities related to Delta Days in their local state legislatures and at annual Delta Days at Nation's Capital; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that all alumnae chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will work closely with collegiate chapters to ensure that college-aged members are aware of legislative efforts and have tools and strategies to engage, mobilize and educate their college peers.

*Submitted by: Georgia State Social Action Committee and the Greensboro Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **2. REAFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FOR VOTING REPRESENTATION FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia - the Nation's Capital and home to more than 600,000 American citizens- has no voting representation in either the United States Senate or the House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, the lack of voting representation in the Congress deprives the residents of the District of Columbia a voice in the legislative affairs of the nation—a right that is granted to every other citizen of the United States; and

WHEREAS, limited voting representation in the House of Representatives is available to the residents of the District of Columbia and the other four United States territories, through a Congressional Delegate;

WHEREAS, the voting rights for Congressional Delegates are subject to the rules of the House of Representatives, which are adopted at the beginning of each congressional session; and

WHEREAS, legislation adopted during the 103rd Congress granted voting rights to the Congressional Delegates in the House Committee of the Whole, but those rights have been alternatively revoked and extended by the political party that holds the majority in each subsequent Congress; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of the 112th Congress, the voting privileges for Congressional Delegates were revoked by the majority party, thus leaving the residents of the District of Columbia without a vote in Congress; and



WHEREAS, the lack of voting rights for the residents of the District of Columbia is inconsistent with the America's founding ideals of no taxation without representation as residents pay both federal and local taxes; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the District of Columbia believe that as a logical step towards Statehood, there should be full voting representation in both the United States Senate and House of Representatives; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., wholeheartedly supports the rights of the residents in the District of Columbia to receive full voting representation in the Congress; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will actively encourage Congressional officials from every state to vote for passage of the District of Columbia Equal Representation Act (H.R. 362) and the District of Columbia Voting Rights Act (H.R. 363) during the current 113th Congress.

*Submitted by: Washington DC Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

### **3. OPPOSING STATE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RESTORATION ACT (RFRA)**

WHEREAS, the U.S. Congress passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) was passed by Congress in 1993 and was ostensibly introduced to protect religious freedom; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court determined in its 1997 City of Boerne v. Flores decision that the RFRA was not a proper exercise of Congress' enforcement power. This ruling led to 22 individual states passing State Religious Freedom Restoration Acts that apply to state governments and local municipalities; and

WHEREAS, state RFRA laws have legalized discrimination against gay Americans by allowing business owners to refuse to serve gay customers due to that owners' religious beliefs; and

WHEREAS, landmark Supreme Court cases have shifted the paradigm of RFRA such as Burwell v Hobby Lobby Stores. Craft store chain Hobby Lobby and its sister company Mardel Christian bookstore want an exemption from an Affordable Care Act requirement that they provide insurance coverage for morning-after pills and similar emergency birth control methods and devices; and

WHEREAS, In Conestoga Wood Specialties Corp. v. Health and Human Services Department, a Mennonite family-owned, profit-making business, claimed that the ACA's birth control mandate violates the company's rights under the First Amendment and the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA); and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that while Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. proudly promotes and supports freedom of religion as a constitutionally-protected right it rejects legalized discrimination under the guise of religious freedom; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. acknowledges that the legalized discrimination of one group of Americans undermines the freedom of all Americans.

*Submitted by the Southern Region Social Action Committee for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

#### **4. RESTORATION OF SECTION 5 OF THE 1965 VOTING RIGHTS ACT AND THE VOTER EMPOWERMENT ACT**

WHEREAS, Voting rights are under attack in America. Each state is slowly and quietly taking the right to vote away from its citizens. Although, so many people died and fought for this precious right.

WHEREAS, we cannot separate the dangerous trend across this nation from our history and the struggle for the right to vote. Before the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, not so very long ago, it was almost impossible for some citizens to register and vote. Many were harassed, jailed, beaten, and some were even killed for trying to participate in the democratic process.

WHEREAS, the process to vote should be easy, simple, and convenient. States are instead creating barriers and making it more difficult for citizens to vote. There are many laws on the books disenfranchising millions of voters such as voter photo identification laws, proof of citizenship laws, and barriers to registration, elimination of early voting and absentee voting, and laws making it harder to restore voting rights for people who have paid their debt to society.

WHEREAS, the right to vote is sacred and we must be vigilant in protecting this right. The vote is the most powerful, non-violent tool in a democratic society; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. urges Congress to restore the power of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by passing new coverage formula language to support the original intent of Section 5 preclearance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. also urges Congress to pass the Voter Empowerment Act calling for the implementation of a modernized voter registration system such as online voter registration, same day registration, and electronic notification of changes to voter information.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. acknowledges that the power of the vote must not be neutralized.

*Submitted by the St. Louis Alumnae Chapter and the Social Action Committees of the Southern and Central Regions for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **5. RESTORATION OF EX-OFFENDER VOTING RIGHTS**

WHEREAS, according to Brennan Center for Justice, nearly 6 million American citizens are unable to vote because of past criminal convictions with as many as 4.4 million of these individuals working and raising families; and

WHEREAS, according to Brennan Center for Justice, there is a disproportionate impact on minorities, with one in every 13 African Americans and more specifically, 13% of African-American men having lost their right to vote. This statistic is seven times the national average; and

WHEREAS, according to National Council of State Legislatures, only two states permit felons to retain their right to vote even while incarcerated and in four states, felons and ex-felons permanently lose their right to vote, without a pardon from the governor; and

WHEREAS, according to The Sentencing Project, 35 states have some type of voting prohibition for ex-offenders who are on probation, parole, or have completed their sentences; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Supreme Court, there is no right more precious in a free country than that of having a voice in the election of those who make the laws under which, as good citizens, we must live. Other rights, even the most basic, are illusory if the right to vote is undermined; and

WHEREAS, the social action goals and objectives of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. aim to advocate for the underserved and disenfranchised and to eliminate racial inequity in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, the social action goals and objectives of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. aim to help increase its membership's knowledge of current local and national issues, so that every Delta will be an informed and effective citizen, advocate, and to influence the enactment of legislation, national and local, of particular interest to African-Americans and women; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., reaffirms its commitment to efforts to protect the voting rights of all citizens, especially disenfranchised populations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. advocates for legislative changes to establish a federal standard that restores voting rights in federal elections; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. advocates for local and State laws that protect the voting rights of ex-offenders and the promotion of effective communications regarding the process to vote after incarceration.

*Submitted by Chicago Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **6. BAN THE BOX FOR RETURNING CITIZENS**

WHEREAS, according to the Prison Policy Initiative, a nonpartisan, nonprofit initiative which documents and publicizes the negative effects of mass incarceration on our entire society, every year 636,000 people walk out of prison gates. Rehabilitation and Corrections experts have long recognized that despite Returning Citizens' best intentions, and the insights and skills they may have acquired through prison-based programming, they are likely to recidivate unless there is community support. Chief among the variables that aid in the successful assimilation of a Returning Citizen is the ability to obtain gainful employment.

WHEREAS, Returning Citizens are often ill-equipped, ill-prepared to make a successful transition. Across the country, organizations such as the Ohio Justice and Policy Center (OJPC) are strong advocates for employment opportunities for Returning Citizens in order to remove barriers from successful re- entry. OJPC successfully pushed for legislation in the state of Ohio - HB 56: the Ohio Fair Hiring Act – which “Bans the Box” for all local government jobs in the state; and

WHEREAS, Ban the Box is the name of an international campaign by civil rights groups and advocates for Returning Citizens, aimed at requiring and persuading employers to remove from their hiring applications the checkbox that asks if applicants have a criminal record. Banning the Box enables Returning Citizens to demonstrate their qualifications during the hiring process before being asked about their criminal records. The premise of the campaign is that anything that makes it harder for Returning Citizens to find a job makes it likelier that they will recidivate, which is bad for society; and

WHEREAS, despite the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's regulation that requires all employers to consider whether a criminal record is relevant before rejecting a candidate, Returning Citizens still face substantial hurdles in attempting to obtain gainful employment; and

WHEREAS, the social action goals and objectives of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. aim to help increase its membership's knowledge of this campaign locally and nationally, so that every Delta will be informed and can effectively advocate, and influence the enactment of regulations and legislation, nationally and locally in support of this initiative.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., opposes efforts to dilute or reverse EEOC Enforcement Guidance Number 915.002 on the Consideration of

Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta supports efforts to “Ban the Box” and other hiring practices that make it easier for Returning Citizens to obtain gainful employment; and, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. advocates for legislation that promotes gainful employment of Returning Citizens at the local, state and federal level, and empowers these citizens to successfully integrate into their communities.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports organizations that engage in fair hiring practices for Returning Citizens by banning the box, conducting background checks later in the hiring process and rejecting applicants only if their prior offense is related to the job which they are seeking.

*Submitted by: Cincinnati Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **7. CALLING FOR AN END TO UNFAIR ASSET FORFEITURE PRACTICES**

WHEREAS, in 1970, Congress passed the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act which included the power to seize private property and which was later expanded in 1984 to allow the government to seize private property regardless of whether the owner was arrested, charged or convicted of a crime; and

WHEREAS, it has been well documented that the war on drugs has been a war on Black and Brown communities leading to an era of unprecedented growth in mass incarceration robbing these communities of talent, potential, and wealth; and

WHEREAS, civil forfeiture is a proceeding brought against the property rather than against the person who committed the offense and civil forfeiture does not require either criminal charges against the owner of the property or a criminal conviction; and

WHEREAS, each year billions of dollars’ worth of assets are seized and never returned to individuals who were never convicted of criminal wrongdoing and federal, state and local police departments profit unfairly from the proceeds of these seizures; and

WHEREAS, today’s civil asset forfeiture system raises several Constitutional issues including violation of the U.S. Constitution’s Appropriations Clause, federalism concerns, deprivation of owners’ chance to challenge the forfeiture in a proceeding and serious due process concerns; and

WHEREAS, the Act was expanded in 1984 when Congress passed the Comprehensive Forfeiture Act which greatly expanded the federal government’s forfeiture powers and enabled

equitable sharing of the proceeds between the federal, state and local government law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, due to serious concerns, in 2000, the Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform Act (CAFRA) was passed which provided some improved due process, yet these reforms did not address the most glaring issues with this practice; and

WHEREAS, numerous examples of police misconduct and abuse of communities are documented including the use of military-style equipment purchased by departments with the funds received through asset forfeiture; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the shortcomings and abuses of asset forfeiture laws, former Attorney General Eric Holder introduced significant reforms in 2015 to limit the circumstances where seizure of property without evidence of a crime can occur, however, Congress failed to enact these reforms; and

WHEREAS, such asset forfeiture practices are inherently unconstitutional, unfairly target Black and Brown communities, facilitate the system of mass incarceration and “The New Jim Crow” and deprive innocent citizens of their property rights;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. seeks to restrict civil asset forfeiture to circumstances where individuals have been convicted of a crime and the asset was involved in the commission of the crime or is the result of the proceeds of the crime; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. calls for an end to civil asset forfeiture against individuals who are not charged nor convicted of a related criminal action; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. calls for reparations for individuals whose assets are wrongly seized in asset forfeiture proceedings.

*Submitted by: New Haven Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **8. FREEDOM AND JUSTICE FOR ALL**

WHEREAS, the Emancipation Proclamation ended chattel slavery in those areas where it applied, and;

WHEREAS, a variety of devices have been enacted which disproportionately criminalize persons of African descent, including the Black Codes, vagrancy laws, convict leasing programs and Jim Crow laws, and;

WHEREAS, despite the equal protections clause in the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, and the enactments of the Civil Rights Act of 1865, the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 and 1868, the Enforcement Acts of 1870 and 1871, the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, the Civil Rights Acts of 1875, 1957, 1960, 1964,

and the Civil Rights Acts of 1968, 1982, and 1991 the United States has government has failed to completely eradicate and prevent systematic discrimination against African-Americans, and;

WHEREAS, despite the fact that the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment declares the right of African-American men to vote, the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the numerous provisions regarding voting rights included in the pieces of legislation listed above, African-Americans continue to be targets of voter suppression and systematic disenfranchisement, and;

WHEREAS, the United Nations' Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, made an official visit to the Washington D.C., Baltimore, Jackson-Mississippi, Chicago and New York City in January, 2016 in order to gather information and assess the situation of African Americans and people of African descent "on the forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, Afrophobia and related intolerance that they face", and;

WHEREAS, The United Nations' Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, after hearing evidence from U.S. government officials and NGO's reached the following conclusions: The colonial history, the legacy of enslavement, racial subordination and segregation, racial terrorism, and racial inequality in the US remains a serious challenge as there has been no real commitment to reparations and to truth and reconciliation for people of African descent. Despite substantial changes since the end of the enforcement of Jim Crow and the fight for civil rights, ideology ensuring the domination of one group over another, continues to negatively impact the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of African-Americans today. The dangerous ideology of white supremacy inhibits social cohesion amongst the US population. Lynching was a form of racial terrorism that has contributed to a legacy of racial inequality that the US must address. Thousands of people of African descent were killed in violent public acts of racial control and domination and the perpetrators were never held accountable. Contemporary police killings and the trauma it creates are reminiscent of the racial terror lynching of the past. Impunity for state violence has resulted in the current human rights crisis and must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. proactively participate in human rights mechanisms of the United Nations to raise awareness of human rights abuses and potential solutions among the members of the sorority, with U.S. elected officials, the general public and the international community, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. work in conjunction with the United Nations, and the NAACP LDF to seek sanctions against all companies currently profiting through the prison industrial complex, and;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Social Action Commission of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., spearhead an initiative to establish a victim impact fund similar to the fund created for the victims of 911 terrorism to ameliorate the current and past effects of systemic racial discrimination.

*Submitted by Nassau (NY) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **9. MISSING CHILDREN OF COLOR: ELIMINATION OF DISPARITIES IN ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW**

WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence and the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution state that all persons, including children under the age of 18, are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness and no state shall deny any person the equal protection of the laws including discrimination against people belonging to various groups; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reports that about 35 percent of missing children are black and an additional 20 percent are Latino; and

WHEREAS, the Black and Missing Foundation, states in a recent report that people of color account for 40 percent of all missing persons in the United States, with many being forced into the sex trade; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, statistics indicate that a total of 242,295 minorities were reported missing in the United States out of total of 647,435 persons from all races; and

WHEREAS, the number of missing children of color is disproportionately higher than the total number of white children who are reported missing; and

WHEREAS, the Congressional Black Caucus has requested the United States Attorney General and the FBI Director to investigate the trend of missing girls of color.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., work to increase the awareness and involvement of its' membership in the education of the citizens in their respective local communities on the crisis of missing children of color, and how they can help in the prevention of this crime. For every Delta should be informed and effective citizen, prepared to advocate for and to influence the enactment of legislation of particular interest to African Americans and their children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., supports this effort with particular emphasis on children of color to eliminate the disproportionate number of minority children who are reported missing yearly in all local jurisdictions throughout the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. advocate for legislative changes where necessary on this issue at local, state, and federal level to protect the rights of children of color; and



BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. support organizations that provide resources for families of missing children of color that include emergency services, counseling, financial resources, education, and legal representation in order to secure their survival and restoration to their children.

*Submitted by: Nassau (NY) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **10. PROTECTING THE IMAGE AND LIVES OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES**

WHEREAS, African-American males are among the most stigmatized ethnic groups in the United States and they remain one of the least understood populations among the major racial groups; and

WHEREAS, African-American males are being challenged in almost every category of survival: incarceration, homicide, school dropout rates, fatherless homes, drug addiction, sexually transmitted diseases, high unemployment, police brutality and poverty; and

WHEREAS, socially-driven mindsets and behaviors result in African-American males being disproportionately disconnected from mainstream society and unfairly portrayed by media outlets; and

WHEREAS, the social institution of the African-American family (including women and children) is impacted by negative images, perceptions and the plight of African-American males and the challenging reality they face today; and

WHEREAS, African-American males should be treated fairly, equally and not only presented in a negative light in the media; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. acknowledges that the image and trajectory of African-American males is marred by serious social, educational, and systematic challenges; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will continue to utilize programs and collaborations with other African-American male mentor programs to further engage, support, strengthen, encourage, educate, and train young African-American males; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. advocates for racial justice, and pursues policies to make America recognize the value of African-American males and reject prejudices that unfairly present black males as people who are inherently frightening; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports organizations, businesses, campaigns and community initiatives that positively position and brand the image of African-American males.

*Submitted by: The Southern Region Social Action Committee for consideration at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **11. RECOGNIZING THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF IMMIGRANTS ON AMERICA AND SUPPORTING COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM**

WHEREAS, America is a nation of immigrants and immigrants have made significant contributions to American culture and the American economy and have had a measurable positive impact on the overall success and productivity of America; and

WHEREAS, according to the Small Business Administration, immigrants are 30% more likely to start businesses in the United States than non-immigrants and 18% of all small business owners in the United States are immigrants; and

WHEREAS, immigrant-owned businesses create jobs for American workers. According to the Fiscal Policy Institute, small businesses owned by immigrants employed an estimated 4.7 million people in 2007, and according to the latest estimates, these small businesses generated more than \$776 billion annually; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Venture Capital Association, immigrants have started 25 percent of the public U. S. companies that were backed by venture capital investors. This list includes Google, eBay, Yahoo!, Sun Microsystems, and Intel; and

WHEREAS, according to the Census Bureau, despite making up only 16 percent of the resident population holding a bachelor's degree or higher, immigrants represent 33 percent of engineers, 27 percent of mathematicians, statisticians, and computer scientist, and 24 percent of physical scientists; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the contributions of immigrants to the overall success and productivity to the American society is paramount to creating effective comprehensive immigration reform.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated supports comprehensive immigration reform that allows for and supports the fair treatment and handling of immigrants in America while recognizing the extensive contributions that immigrants make to the American culture and economy; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is opposed to using any taxes or public funds to build a wall to stop entry to the United States by immigrants.

*Submitted by: the Southern Region Social Action Committee and Alabama State Social Action Committee for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## 12. REFORMATION OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

WHEREAS, many Americans are outraged that for the second time in five elections, the presidential candidate who won the most popular votes lost the election.

WHEREAS, every presidential election, candidates are forced to only compete in a handful of swing states, and effectively ignore voters in every other state in the union.

WHEREAS, the winner-take-all Electoral College system that led to this anti-democratic outcome must be changed so that voters in all 50 states have a say in choosing our president.

WHEREAS, the United States Electoral College is the mechanism established by the United States Constitution for the indirect election of the President of the United States and Vice President of the United States. Citizens of the United States vote in each state at a general election to choose a slate of "electors" pledged to vote for a party's candidate.

WHEREAS, the Twelfth Amendment requires each elector to cast one vote for President and another vote for vice president.

WHEREAS, In a [representative democracy](#), the popular vote is the total number or [percentage of votes](#) received by a [party](#), candidate or group of candidates, as opposed to the number of seats they win in the [representative assembly](#) or, as in the [United States](#), in the [Electoral College](#) in a [presidential election](#).

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. urge Congress to reform the Electoral College and to create an equitable election process allowing for a truly representative democracy for the election of the President of the United States and the Vice President of the United States.

*Submitted by: Southern Region Social Action Committee and Georgia Social Action Committee for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## 13. RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965 SECTION 4(B)

WHEREAS, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed “to address entrenched racial discrimination in voting, ‘an insidious and pervasive evil which had been perpetuated in certain parts of our country through unremitting and ingenious defiance of the Constitution.’” *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder*, 133 S. Ct. 2612, 2615 (2013); and

WHEREAS, in *Shelby County, Alabama v Holder*, the United States Supreme Court declared that the coverage formula established in Section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act, which was used to determine the state and local governments subject to Section 5 preclearance, was unconstitutional; and

WHEREAS, in reaching its decision in *Shelby County, Alabama v Holder*, the United States Supreme Court noted that “[n]early 50 years later, things have changed dramatically. Largely because of the Voting Rights Act, ‘[v]oter turnout and registration rates’ in covered jurisdictions ‘now approach parity...’” *Shelby County*, 133 S. Ct. at 2616; and

WHEREAS, discriminatory tactics still exist to deny African Americans and other minorities the right to vote and federal intervention is necessary to continue the approach to parity, as evidenced by the following examples:

- a. The United States Justice Department’s reliance on Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act to object to a 2011 attempt by the City of Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi, to implement a redistricting plan that reduced the percentage of African-American voters in one ward from 53 percent to 47 percent. (*Testimony Sherrilyn Ifill; Fact Sheet*, Leadership Conference Education Fund)
- b. In 2012, the City of Clinton, Mississippi, proposed a districting plan for its six-member council that did not include a single ward where African-Americans voters had the power to elect their candidate of choice, despite the fact that 34% of the city’s population is African-American. The Justice Department objected to the proposed district lines and the City of Clinton re-drew the lines, creating for the first time a ward where African-Americans voters would have the opportunity to elect their preferred candidate. (*Testimony Sherrilyn Ifill*);
- c. About 34 percent of all Mississippi counties surveyed have closed polling places since Shelby, resulting in at least 44 fewer polling places for the 2016 election. (Ari Berman, *The Nation*, November 4, 2014); and

WHEREAS, research shows that photo ID laws, such as Mississippi’s Voter ID Law, bear more heavily on voters of color, who are less likely to own government-issued photo ID (disparate impact) and much more likely to be asked by poll officials to show ID before voting (disparate treatment).

WHEREAS, to combat the effect of *Shelby*, the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2015 was introduced in the United States House of Representatives which,” [a]mends the Voting Rights Act of 1965 with respect to the requirement that a federal court retain jurisdiction for an appropriate period to prevent commencement of new devices to deny or abridge the right to vote. Expands the types of violations triggering the authority of a court to retain such jurisdiction to include certain violations of the Act as well as violations of any federal voting rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group,” and

WHEREAS, requirements that an individual provide a photo identification as a condition of receiving a ballot for voting in a federal, state, or local election often result in a denial or abridgment of the right to vote, and

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., has from its inception been committed to fighting the social injustices that exist in this country including finding ways to ensure that all citizens have an opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., supports ways to improve opportunities for all citizens to exercise their right to vote free of discriminatory practices of state and local governments, opposes enactment of voter ID laws and/or the elimination of voting precincts in predominately African-American communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., advocates for the implementation of legislation to combat the devastating effects that Shelby has had on minorities rights to vote; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., supports the passage of the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2015 to restore and strengthen Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Voter Empowerment Act of 2015.

*Submitted by: Southern Region Social Action Committee and Mississippi State Social Action Committee to be presented at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **14. SENTENCING REFORM: ELIMINATING RACIAL DISPARITIES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

WHEREAS, approximately 2 million people are incarcerated in federal, state, or local prisons and jails per the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

WHEREAS, African Americans constitute 13% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau); yet they are nearly 40% of the total 2 million incarcerated population per the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

WHEREAS, African-American males are 6 times more likely to be incarcerated than white males and 2.5 times more likely than Hispanic males per the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

WHEREAS, 1 of every 3 African-American males born since 2001 can expect to be incarcerated in his lifetime; 1 of every 17 white American males born today can expect to go to prison in his lifetime per the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

WHEREAS, 1 of every 18 African-American women born since 2001 can expect to be incarcerated in her lifetime; 1 of every 111 white American women born today can expect to go to prison in her lifetime per the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

WHEREAS, Racial minorities are more likely than white Americans to be arrested; once arrested, they are more likely to be convicted; and once convicted, they are more likely to face stiff sentences per the Bureau of Justice Statistics

WHEREAS, current criminal justice system policies and practices contribute to racial disparities in sentencing per the Sentencing Project and the National Association for the Advancement of Color People (NAACP)

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. stands for responsible criminal justice policies and support efforts that will end racial disparities in sentencing while respecting public safety.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. advocates for correctional and sentencing reform legislation, regulation, and policy at the local, state and federal levels.

*Submitted by: Marietta-Roswell Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **15. SUPPORT OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES**

WHEREAS, equity is defined as “the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair.” The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. Equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept; and

WHEREAS, equity is a complex combination of interrelated elements consciously designed to create, support and sustain social justice. It is a robust system and dynamic process that reinforces and replicates equitable ideas, power, resources, strategies, conditions, habits and outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Inclusion is the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure of inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging; and

WHEREAS, African Americans have often been in a consistent state of exclusion, recipients of injustices and as a race are not present in any considerations of fairness; and

WHEREAS, new manifestations of racism continue to emerge and outpace equity mechanisms and capacities to solve them.

WHEREAS, the new Civil Rights Movement in this country must demand “equity and inclusion” for African Americans, especially when statistics continue to reflect the decline and denial of access in a systemic and structural manner to all aspects of American society, and continues each year to keep and push a significant portion of our race and people further behind; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. urge the enforcement of all existing legislation, policies, and procedures that promote within its framework the concept of equitable and just treatment of African Americans in the United States. As well as, advocate where necessary for the passage of supporting legislation.

*Submitted by: Southern Region Social Action Committee and Georgia Social Action Committee for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **CRIME AND VIOLENCE—UPDATED NOVEMBER 2018**

### **1. A RESOLUTION ON THE EFFECT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON WOMEN AND TEENAGE GIRLS—2008 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, in a statement of March 8, 2007, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon stated that. “Violence against women and girls continues unabated in every continent, country and culture. It takes a devastating toll on women’s lives, on their families, and on society as a whole. Most societies prohibit such violence — yet the reality is that, too often it is covered up or tacitly condoned;” and

WHEREAS, domestic violence, including rape, is pervasive in many countries, and cuts across ethnic, racial, socioeconomic and sexual orientation, knows no boundaries and is a violation of human rights; and

WHEREAS, at least twelve hundred women are killed each year in the United States by a current or former husband, boyfriend or partner; and

WHEREAS, a woman is battered in the United States at least every twelve seconds; and

WHEREAS, up to thirty percent of women in the United States will be physically abused by a partner at least once in their life; and

WHEREAS, abuse by a husband, boyfriend or partner is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of fifteen and forty-four; and

WHEREAS, research reveals that a high percentage of high school students experience violence in a dating relationship; and

WHEREAS, the American Bar Association (ABA) cites that nearly 25% of 14-17 year-olds surveyed know at least one student who was a victim of dating violence, while 11% know multiple victims of dating violence, 33% of teens have actually witnessed such an event, and the ABA further cites that 77% of female and 67% of male high school students endorse some form of

sexual coercion, including unwanted kissing, hugging, genital contact, and sexual intercourse; and

WHEREAS, studies further reveal that patterns of dating violence behavior often start early and carry through into adult relationships, and that violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications for victims, to wit: abuse in their adult relationships and a higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, and suicide

WHEREAS, according to the March of Dimes, battering during pregnancy is a leading cause of birth defects and infant mortality; and

WHEREAS, half of all homeless women and children in America are fleeing domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence extends far beyond the home, and has a significant economic impact upon health care, lost productivity, police time, earnings, and physical and mental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence destroys the family unit and well-being of the family and community, leads to neglect and abused children have a greater chance of becoming involved in crime; and

WHEREAS, many battered women are often denied protection by the police and the courts and have insufficient assets and resources to leave the situation; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, That Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. continue its support of global initiatives that fight against domestic violence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. continue to build partnerships with organizations that address the needs of battered women and abused children, such as women's shelters, rape crisis centers, social service organizations and The Commissions on the Status of Women; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc use its influence to encourage all levels of government to provide resources for the protection of women and children, and make ending domestic violence a top priority.

*Submitted by the Northern Virginia and North Manhattan Alumnae Chapters at the 2008 National Convention.*



## **2. A RESOLUTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN**

WHEREAS, a sexually exploited child is someone under the age of 18 who may be subject to sexual exploitation because she or he engaged, or agreed to engage, in sexual conduct in return for food, a fee, clothing, or a place to stay, so-called "survival sex"; and

WHEREAS, this includes sexual activities such as children being forced to disrobe; children being filmed performing sexual acts; or children trading sex acts for drugs

WHEREAS, one in four girls and one in ten boys are sexually exploited in some way by age 18 in their respective community; and

WHEREAS, the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children is prevalent in cities such as Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, Detroit, El Paso, Honolulu, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, New Orleans, Oakland, Philadelphia, San Antonio, San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco and Seattle; and

WHEREAS, between 100,000 and 300,000 children annually are subjected to prostitution and pornography in the United States; and

WHEREAS, it has been reported that the number of youth victimized by the sex trade is on the rise and that youth as young as 11-and 12-years old are becoming involved; and

WHEREAS, the overwhelming majority of these sexually-exploited youth have a history of psychological, physical or sexual abuse as younger children and many have been raised amid stark poverty and family dysfunction; and

WHEREAS, the general response to this issue has been to prosecute sexually exploited youth as criminals; and

WHEREAS, appropriate services for sexually-exploited youth do not exist in the juvenile justice system and that both federal and international law recognize that sexually-exploited youth are the victims of crime and should be treated as such;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. recognize that sexually exploited youth are not criminals but rather victims; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that local chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. build partnerships with organizations providing services to sexually exploited youth such as including diversion, crisis intervention, counseling, and emergency and long-term housing services; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will use its influence to encourage state and congressional lawmakers to adopt legislation that will protect children who have been sexually exploited and to increase penalties associated with sexual crimes against them.

*Submitted by the New York Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

### **3. A RESOLUTION TO BAN CELL PHONE USE WHILE DRIVING IN ALL 50 STATES AND TO ENFORCE STRONG LAWS AGAINST DISTRACTED DRIVING—UPDATED NOVEMBER 2018**

WHEREAS, in 2009, nearly 6,000 people were killed and more than half a million people injured in crashes involving a distracted or inattentive driver; and

WHEREAS, drivers under 20 are the worst offenders of distracted driving and are at a greater risk for getting into an accident than other drivers; and

WHEREAS, 71 percent of people between the ages of 18 and 49 admit to texting or talking on the phone while driving; and

WHEREAS, bus drivers, train operators, truck drivers, and school bus operators have allowed distractions such as cell phones, iPods and video games to interfere with their work; and

WHEREAS, an engineer operating a commuter train in Chatsworth, California was texting when he overlooked a stop sign resulting in the death of 25 passengers and injuries to 135 others; and

WHEREAS, only sixteen states prohibit all drivers from using cell phones without a hands-free device driving, 38 states ban all cell phone use by novice drivers and only 21 states enforce school bus drivers not to use cell phones when passengers are present; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. urges drivers to avoid the use of cell phones and all communications devices or use hands-free technology when they are behind the wheel; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. urges its members to speak out about the dangers of distracted driving.

*Submitted by North Manhattan Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

#### **4. A RESOLUTION TO END JUVENILE LIFE WITHOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF PAROLE SENTENCES—ARCHIVED NOVEMBER 2018**

WHEREAS, there are more than 2,500 juvenile offenders in prison in the United States serving life without parole for crimes they committed under the age of eighteen, in contravention of international human rights law; and

WHEREAS, adolescent brain research has confirmed that the human brain is not fully developed until a person's mid-20s and that children do not have adult levels of judgment, impulse control, or ability to assess risks; and

WHEREAS, nearly 60% of the people serving juvenile life without parole sentences were first-time offenders; and

WHEREAS, the sentence is imposed in an arbitrary manner, as evidenced by the fact that on average African-American youth are serving the sentence at a per capita rate that is 10 times that of white youth and further evidenced by the fact that five states--California, Florida, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Michigan--imprison two-thirds of all persons serving life without parole for crimes committed during their youth; and

WHEREAS, the imposition of life without parole sentences to young people is especially cruel because of the numerous state and federal laws that recognize that children are different from adults and regulate their access to tobacco, alcohol, marriage, voting, the military and serving on a jury; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court declared in the case of Graham v. Florida (May 2010) that sentencing juveniles for the rest of their lives for crimes in which no one was killed constituted cruel and unusual punishment banned by the Eighth Amendment; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court, in holding the death penalty was unconstitutional when applied to juveniles, stated in the case of Roper v Simmons that "From a moral standpoint it is misguided to equate the failings of a minor with those of an adult, for a greater possibility exists that a minor's character deficiencies will be reformed."; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will advocate for the elimination of life without parole sentences for juveniles and for a just alternative that will hold the young person accountable for their actions but will ensure that those who have been reformed are given an opportunity to re-enter society.

*Submitted by Baton Rouge Delta Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that sentencing juveniles to a mandatory life in prison without the possibility of parole is unconstitutional. *Miller v. Alabama*, 567 US 460 (2012)

## **5. A RESOLUTION FOR THE RECOMMITMENT TO END POLICE VIOLENCE**

WHEREAS, by the passage of a resolution in 1990, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. recognized the alarming rate of police violence and abuse perpetrated against people of color by police officers and called for an end to police violence; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Department of Justice Bureau of Statistics, although they constitute approximately 13 percent of the United States' population, African Americans constitute 25 percent of reported victims of police violence; are four times more likely than whites to be the victim of police violence and constitute more than 30 percent of arrest related homicides; and

WHEREAS, the acquittal of police officers involved in the deaths of Timothy Stansbury, Jr., Amadou Diallo and Sean Bell in New York, Timothy Thomas in Ohio, Bernard Monroe in Louisiana, and Aaron Campbell in Oregon, among others, demonstrate that across the country local district attorneys are unwilling or unable to indict or to successfully convict police officers accused of shooting unarmed citizens; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Justice is empowered to bring federal criminal charges against those who willfully deprive another individual of a constitutional right and who, with deliberate and specific intent, do commit an act that is forbidden by law. Yet, since 1994, the United States Department of Justice has chosen to prosecute less than two percent of police shooting cases that have been investigated by federal agents; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. reaffirms its commitment to ending police violence and abuse perpetrated against people of color by police and other law enforcement officers;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. calls for the U.S. Department of Justice to aggressively prosecute police shootings of unarmed citizens as criminal violations of the civil rights of the victims.

*Submitted by the Queens Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

## **6. A RESOLUTION FOR TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION**

WHEREAS, 1 in 4 adolescents report verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse from a dating partner each year; and

WHEREAS, 69 percent of all teens who had sex by the age 14 report that they have experienced one or more types of abuse in a relationship; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, the United States Senate unanimously passed a resolution designating February as Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month; and

WHEREAS, most states have enacted laws that permit teens to get court-ordered protection from abusers; and

WHEREAS, several states have enacted or have laws pending that mandate the teaching of warning signs for dating violence and abuse in both middle school and high school; and

WHEREAS, 74 percent of sons and 66 percent of daughters report that they have not had a conversation with their parents about dating abuse; and

WHEREAS, 81 percent of parents either believe that teen dating violence is not an issue or admit that they do not know if this is a serious issue; and

WHEREAS, according to the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCAD), dating violence is a pattern of over-controlling behavior used against a girlfriend or boyfriend. It takes many forms which may include mental, emotional, physical or sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS, The CCAD reveals the isolation that teens face in abusive dating situations makes it hard to develop new mature relationships; feel emotionally independent; develop personal values and beliefs, and stay focused in school and on tasks.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., will make ongoing efforts to prevent the isolation of teens involved in abusive relationships and assist in preventing the onset of the violence cycle; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will hold seminars to teach teenagers and parents the warning signs of violent relationships, and provide information for assistance with protection and support; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that local chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will support state efforts to enact laws requiring state and local school authorities to adopt or to create curricula that will educate teens and pre-teens about dating violence and abuse; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. will work to counteract negative media images that may contribute to teen dating violence by exposing teens to positive images and an opportunity to interact with positive role models in their own communities.

*Submitted by East Kings County Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

## **7. A RESOLUTION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT FOR 2010**

WHEREAS, every day around the world a war is waged against women and girls, taking millions of lives and causing terrible suffering; and

WHEREAS, approximately one out of every three women globally has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime; and

WHEREAS, violence against women is preventable and that there are proven solutions that work; and

WHEREAS, The International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA H.R. 4594, S. 2982), if passed, would for the first time comprehensively incorporate these solutions into all U.S. foreign assistance programs -solutions such as promoting women's economic opportunity, addressing violence against girls in school, and working to change public attitudes

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. promote passage of the IVAWA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will include this legislation in its advocacy efforts; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will work with the appropriate organizations and government entities to secure accurate information on the progress of advocacy efforts on behalf of this legislation.

*Submitted by Fort Worth Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

## **8. ENACTING GUN CONTROL LAWS TO CURB GUN VIOLENCE**

WHEREAS, 467,321 persons were victims of a crime committed with a firearm in 2011. In the same year, data collected by the FBI showed that firearms were used in 68 percent of murders, 41 percent of robbery offenses and 21 percent of aggravated assaults nationwide. Most homicides in the United States are committed with firearms, especially handguns; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, firearms were the instrument of death in 85 percent of teen homicides and 40 percent of teen suicides; and

WHEREAS, the costs of U.S. gun violence in work lost, medical care, insurance, criminal justice expenses and pain and suffering amounted to as much as \$174 billion dollars in 2010; and

WHEREAS, one out of three handguns is kept loaded and unlocked in homes in this country. The presence of a gun in the home triples the risk of homicide in the home. The presence of a

gun in the home increases the risk of suicide fivefold. A gun kept in the home is 22 times more likely to be used in an unintentional shooting than to be used to injure or kill in self-defense; and

WHEREAS, fewer than 2% of all men die from homicide in the United States. Half of black male deaths between ages 15 and 24 are by homicide. The 62 center cities of America's 50 largest metro areas account for 15 percent of the population but 39 percent of gun-related murders, 11 percent of suicides, and 23 percent of total homicides; and

WHEREAS, the disparity of firearm laws in the various states allow for easy criminal access to and transportation of handguns across state borders, thereby undermining the efforts of local law enforcement to keep illegal guns from flowing into their communities from other jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the White House revealed that although currently federally licensed firearms dealers are required to run background checks on those buying guns, studies estimate that nearly 40 percent of all gun sales are made by private sellers who are exempt from this requirement; and

WHEREAS, a national survey of inmates found that only 12 percent of those who used a handgun in a crime acquired it from a retail store or pawn shop, where a background check should have been run; and

WHEREAS, the ready availability in most states of rapid-fire military-style, and semi- automatic assault weapons for civilian sale contributes to the carnage on our streets, and poses a special hazard to law enforcement officers who often find themselves out-gunned by criminals armed with such weapons; and

WHEREAS, research on certain legislative changes, i.e. background checks for private transfers of firearms, better cross-referencing of mental health records during background checks and better implementation of gun carry laws by local law enforcement has proven effective in curbing gun crime; and

WHEREAS, nearly every major law enforcement organization in the country supports these common-sense measures, as do many other national organizations concerned with public safety; and

WHEREAS, President Obama said following the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, "We won't be able to stop every violent act, but if there is even one thing that we can do to prevent any of these events, we have a deep obligation, all of us, to try."

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., supports the efforts of Congress to reduce and prevent gun violence while recognizing the fundamental right of each citizen to self-protection. The Second Amendment, like every other civil right, is not absolute. The right to own a weapon is circumscribed by legitimate interests of public health and safety.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., urges Congress to pass legislation requiring universal background checks for gun buyers. We should close the private sale loophole so that, to the greatest extent possible, every gun purchase is subject to a thorough background check. 82% of U.S. gun owners -- including more than 70% of NRA members -- support criminal background checks for all gun sales. Ninety-two percent of all households in the country support universal background checks. Persons adjudicated by a court as dangerous to themselves or others should not have access to guns.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., urges Congress to pass legislation to ban civilian ownership of assault/military type weapons. The carnage caused by assault/military type weapons outweighs the benefits to civilians, especially considering the available alternatives for self-protection and sportsmanship. There should also be a limitation on the number of rounds that an ammunition magazine will fire and require a 3-day waiting period prior to gun purchase.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., advocate that Congress pass legislation that will create a national registry of gun ownership to aid law enforcement in tracking guns used illegally.

*Submitted by: Berkley Bay Area Alumnae Chapter, Federal City Alumnae, Minneapolis-St. Paul Alumnae, Stone Mountain-Lithonia Alumnae, Valley Forge Alumnae Chapters and Southern Regional Social Action Committee for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **9. IN OPPOSITION TO “STAND YOUR GROUND” LAWS**

IN MEMORY OF TRAYVON MARTIN

WHEREAS, a "stand your ground" law states that a person may use deadly force in self-defense without the duty to retreat when faced with a reasonable perceived threat; and

WHEREAS, such laws expand on the "Castle doctrine," which states that a person is protected under the law to use deadly force in self-defense when his or her property or home is being invaded; and

WHEREAS, more than half of the states in the U.S. have some form of "Castle doctrine" or "stand your ground" law on the books; and,

WHEREAS, more than 20 states, beginning in 2005, have adopted an expanded Castle Doctrine or Stand Your Ground law; and

WHEREAS, controversy surrounding "stand your ground" laws reached a boiling point with the February 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch individual, who shot and killed Trayvon Martin, who was unarmed, after pursuing him; and



WHEREAS, the public outcry over the death of Trayvon Martin has resulted in heightened concerns about the use of the "stand your ground" defense; and

WHEREAS, questions about the possible connection between the application of "stand your ground" defenses and the troubling phenomenon of "racial profiling"; and,

WHEREAS, the expansion of the Castle Doctrine and "stand your ground" defenses has resulted in the proliferation of homicides and the a continued rise in vigilantism and lawless acts, translating into an additional 600 deaths per year across the nation; and,

WHEREAS, research indicates that "stand your ground" laws are not a deterrent to burglary, robbery or aggravated assault.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., urge President Obama to establish a Congressional Task Force to study the impact of these laws on the safety and well-being of communities as a whole and their application in the criminal justice system; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that in the memory of Trayvon Martin, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., advocates for the repeal of "stand your ground" laws and against any attempts to expand the "Castle doctrine."

*Submitted by: Greenville Alumnae, East Kings County Alumnae and South Broward Alumnae Chapters for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **10. ENDING MASS INCARCERATION**

WHEREAS, the United States incarcerates more human beings than any other country, both in terms of actual numbers and in relation to population size; and

WHEREAS, one in three young African-American men is currently under the control of the criminal justice system; that is, they are in prison, in jail, on probation, or on parole and therefore, America's criminal justice system is predominately black; and

WHEREAS, the United States comprises roughly 5% of the world's population, but confines 25% of the world's prisoners with about 46% incarceration resulting from non-violent drug convictions; and

WHEREAS, David Garland, an American sociologist, coined the term "mass incarceration" in 2001 to characterize the uniquely modern social phenomenon of extraordinarily high incarceration rates distinctive to America alone; and

WHEREAS, "mass incarceration" deepens disadvantage and forecloses mobility for those "marginal populations" in society, specifically African-Americans, in that a criminal record

reduces callbacks from prospective employers by around 50% with an effect larger upon African Americans than Caucasians; and

WHEREAS, the concealing effects of “mass incarceration” is most notably found in voter access and turnout since a felony conviction carries short and long-term restrictions on voting in 48 states and because incarceration determines not only voter eligibility, but also inclusion in voting statistics; and

WHEREAS, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) notes that with the rise of the prison industrial complex, “shifts in educational policy provide the immediate impetus for the flow of children from school to the legal system.” Education policies, such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) approach to education, which overemphasizes testing and but doesn’t provide enough money to schools to achieve success, and those that result in the under-representation of students of color in advanced placement courses and their over-representation in special education tracks, have negatively impacted students of color; and

WHEREAS, the Advancement Project reports that 40% of students expelled from school each year are black. Black students are 3 ½ times more likely to be suspended from school than white students. Black male preschoolers ages 4 to 5 make up half of all out of school suspensions. Seventy percent of all students who get an “in-school” arrest and are referred to law enforcement officers are Black and Latino; and

WHEREAS, Black females are not excluded from the “School-to-Prison Pipeline.” In 2010, Black girls were suspended for being “loud” but not disrespectful, and were regarded as being disruptive and therefore more deserving of punishment. They are suspended six times more often than white girls; and

WHEREAS, the United States spent \$70 billion dollars in incarceration, probation and parole from 1987-2007, it only increased funding for higher education by 21% for the same 20 year span. On average, states spend approximately \$11k per pupil per year to educate students, but spend \$28k on housing individuals in jail according to a 2009 Justice Policy Institute Report. The per diem costs of locking up one young person in a juvenile facility ranged from \$24 in Wyoming to \$726 in Connecticut; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., supports efforts to reduce the rates of black elementary and secondary school children being suspended and/or expelled for perceived minor infractions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports raising awareness of the school-to-prison pipeline and its effects on the black family; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. advocates for legislative changes on the local, state and federal level that protect the rights of our children to receive fair education without reprisal for incidents that can be handled by school administrations; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is committed to challenging and closing the school-to-prison pipeline that has exacerbated the high incidents of zero tolerance policies that prevent children from taking full advantage of their right to an education and educational resources.

*Submitted by the Prince George's County Alumnae and Syracuse Alumnae Chapters for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **11. INCREASING POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY**

WHEREAS, over the past year there have been multiple incidents of unarmed citizens being killed by law enforcement officials; and

WHEREAS, many of the incidents raised questions of racial profiling, police violence, law enforcement policies, police accountability and the regard and safety of Black lives; and

WHEREAS, statistically, few law enforcement officers have been charged or indicted for having killed unarmed citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 mandated the collection of data on the use of excessive force by police in the line of duty. The National Center for Health Statistics maintains the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) fails to identify whether a homicide was related to police use of force. Participation in the FBI UCR is voluntary. Researchers have concluded that "reliable estimates of the number of justifiable homicides committed by police officers in the United States do not exist"; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement officials have been exonerated for the use of excessive force that led to the deaths of arrestees, even when such methods have been banned or forbidden;

WHEREAS, law enforcement officials have been exonerated for use of excessive and/or deadly force, even when the incident is videotaped; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement officers have been deemed responsible for, but not held accountable for causing the death of unarmed suspects who present no immediate threat by the use deadly force; and

WHEREAS, there is no national standard for training on crisis intervention to de-escalate situations when a suspect is mentally ill; and

WHEREAS, there are no national standards defining the appropriate use of lethal force; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports the enactment of a federal law on the use of lethal force by law enforcement officials; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports mandatory crisis intervention training, which includes how to deal with mentally ill suspects, for law enforcement officers, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports independent review boards at the local level to investigate the law enforcement agency or department in every case where a suspect is mortally wounded by an officer of that law enforcement agency or department.

*Submitted by the Greenville (NC), Greensboro (NC), Columbus (OH), Nassau (NY), Springfield –Decatur Area (IL) Alumnae Chapters for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **12. TEEN DATING VIOLENCE**

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. encourages all adolescents to develop healthy interpersonal relationships with peers and adults that are based in mutual respect and free from all forms of abuse, including emotional, physical and sexual maltreatment; and

WHEREAS, teen dating violence has the potential to adversely impact all aspects of an adolescent's life and continue into adulthood; and

WHEREAS, one-third of high school students either have been or will be involved in an abusive relationship and go on to develop abusive relationships as adults that involve children and increase the likelihood of continuing the cycle of abuse; and

WHEREAS, teaching young people about healthy relationships and ways to avoid physical dating violence can reduce physical dating violence and sexual dating violence by 60%; and

WHEREAS, children and youth between the ages of 12-19 years of age experience the highest rates of rape and sexual assault, and

WHEREAS, teen dating violence may lead to antisocial behaviors, substance abuse, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation and an increased likelihood of suicide attempts; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. urges Congress to vigorously enforce laws which prohibit all forms of partner violence, and promote activities that foster character education among children and teens, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will introduce and support policies that combat teen dating violence and its underlying causes, through letter writing

campaigns to elected officials, education and increasing public awareness to combat this issue; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and all of its chapters will become involved in increasing awareness of the issues and impact of partner violence among teens through collaborative work with violence prevention programs and will continue to initiate teen-centered programs which increase self-esteem, while promoting healthy relationships.

*Submitted by the Gwinnett County Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention*

### **13. EXPANSION OF SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

WHEREAS, according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, domestic violence is, “the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats, and emotional or psychological abuse;” and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in collaboration with the National Institutes of Justice, and the Department of Defense conducted the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence (NISVS) telephone survey in 50 states and the District of Columbia in 2011. Nationally, approximately 1.9 million women were raped twelve months before taking the survey; 11.4 percent of multiracial women, 9.6 percent of non-Hispanic white women, 8.8% of non-Hispanic black women, and 6.2 percent Hispanic women were raped by an intimate partner during their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, violence starts early. Before the age of eighteen, 8.5 million women first experienced rape, and 1 in 4 women have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, for women of color, socioeconomic challenges, lack of education, diminished employment opportunities, language challenges, and fears of deportation increase the difficulty of seeking resources to combat domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 29.1 percent of African-American females are victimized by intimate partner violence through rape, physical assault, or stalking in their lifetimes. African-American females experience intimate partner violence at a rate that is 35 percent higher than that of white females and about 2.5 times the rate of women of other races; African-American women experience higher rates of intimate partner homicide when compared to their white counterparts; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence continues to affect women of all races. The devastation African-American women experience from intimate partner relationship violence is compounded because of historical and present-day racism, discrimination, the vulnerability of African-American men to police brutality, and negative stereotyping; and

WHEREAS, a key component of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated's mission is to address issues that impact the communities we serve, domestic violence obliterates the wellbeing of women which in turn leads to the destruction of the family unit, which affects the mental, emotional, and physical functioning of women, men, and children; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that all chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated expand collaborative partnerships with community-based organizations working to eradicate domestic violence through advocacy efforts; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated will utilize Delta Days events in all seven regions as an opportunity to urge legislators to expand programs, safe houses, available financial assistance, and emotional support to victims of domestic violence.

*Submitted by: San Bernardino-Riverside Area Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

#### **14. IMPROVING THE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION OF STUDENTS FROM SEXUAL ASSAULT AND RAPE ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES**

WHEREAS, according to statistics on sexual violence from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, one in five women and one in 16 men are sexually assaulted in college, more than 90% of sexual assault victims on college campuses do not report the assault, and 63.3% of men at one university who self-reported acts that qualify as rape or attempted rape admitted to committing repeated rapes; and

WHEREAS, according to a special report released in December 2014 by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), rape and sexual assault are defined as including "completed and attempted rape, completed and attempted sexual assault, and threats of rape". It further states that during the period of 1995-2013, females ages 18-24 consistently had the highest rate of rape and sexual assault victimizations compared to females in all other age groups, and fewer than 1 in 5 female students received assistance from a victim service agency; and

WHEREAS, in January 2014, President Barack Obama and Vice President Joseph Biden issued a Presidential Memorandum creating the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault to focus on the seriousness and urgency of colleges and universities addressing sexual misconduct, which found that sexual assault most often happens in a young woman's freshman or sophomore year, and in most cases the attacker is known to her. Further, many are

survivors of “incapacitated assault,” often blame themselves, and may be unaware of their school’s adjudication process; and

WHEREAS, according to a study by the Association of University Professors, the detrimental effects of sexual assault on campus may be physical injury, emotional damage (may require medical treatment and/or counseling), pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs/HIV), and impact on scholastic achievement as college students surviving sexual assault rarely perform at their prior academic levels. There are times victims are unable to carry a normal course load, skip classes or drop courses altogether, ultimately leaving the school, or transferring; and

WHEREAS, according to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, schools that receive federal funding have an obligation and responsibility to address the problems identified by sexual assault, students who report sexual violence have a right to expect the school to take steps to protect and support them. Schools that fail to provide such protections could risk disciplinary action, inclusive of loss of federal funding. However, the U.S. Department of Education has never taken away federal funds from any school involved in sexual assault or harassment cases since Title IX was signed into law in 1972; and the number of complaints filed has increased 80% over the past 30 years; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. advocates for and supports mandates that require college campuses to implement a comprehensive prevention, response, and survivor program that includes an education component defining “consent” and risk factors presented by alcohol and drugs; the laws regarding sexual assault; violence and rape; the engagement of young men as allies; and that supports and assists all students; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. advocates a national strategy that colleges and universities provide a culture, climate, and environment of zero tolerance that seeks to eradicate incidences of sexual assault and rape of college students on college campuses.

*Submitted by: Annapolis Alumnae Chapter for consideration at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **15. LETHAL FORCE: LAST RESORT**

WHEREAS, the March 2017 Ruderman Family Foundation Report stated that disabled persons and those with disabilities make up a third to one-half of all people fatally killed by law enforcement officers, and in many instances their hands were raised in surrender; and

WHEREAS, the first response to any perceived danger to the officer is the use of a lethal weapon, which in many instances escalates into a fatal shooting or procedures that result in death. This is illustrated by the cases of Ethan Saylor with Downs Syndrome who was dragged from a movie theater and forcibly restrained until he died of asphyxiation; Michelle Cusseaux

diagnosed with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder fatally shot dead when she allegedly charged at an officer with a hammer; and deaf Daniel Harris was shot and killed almost immediately after exiting his vehicle while trying to communicate in sign language; and

WHEREAS, Charles Kinsey, autistic caretaker, was trying to explain to the police his patient's condition, the policeman shot at the patient who he believed posed a danger and accidentally hit the caretaker. There are other cases documented by Innocent Down, an organization which holds an annual vigil for presumed innocent victims of police violence; and

WHEREAS, current practices place the highest priority on keeping law officers safe, but do not adequately address non-life threatening situations that involve, mental health issues and other disabilities, even when family members or others explain; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that training for law enforcement include a disability curriculum including mental health, physical disabilities, autism, and other developmental, intellectual and cognitive disabilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that law enforcement at every level train and deploy, whenever feasible, crisis teams when situations are identified as disability related; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Social Action Committees of local chapters establish a liaison by August 2018 with their local police so there can be community forums for families to aid them in assisting disabled family members in the appropriate behavior should there be an encounter with law enforcement.

*Submitted by: Chester (SC) Alumnae Chapter for consideration at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **16. RAPE SURVIVOR FAMILY PROTECTION**

WHEREAS, the federal 2015 Rape Survivor Child Custody Act encouraged States to enact laws regarding termination of parental rights of rapists but there are still seven states without laws preventing rapists from gaining custody of children conceived without consent and the rapist has the same rights as any other biological father; and

WHEREAS, the federal law, 42 USCA §14043h, incentivizes states to pass laws permitting rape survivors to “seek court-ordered termination of the parental rights of her rapist with regard to that child, which the court is authorized to grant upon clear and convincing evidence of rape” and which do not require a conviction; and

WHEREAS, forty-three states and the District of Columbia have legislation that offers at least some protection to prevent rape victims from facing their attackers over parental rights, but these legislative protections vary greatly where some states require publication of a rape victim's and child's name and dates of birth when the rapist is unknown or cannot be served; and



WHEREAS, according to the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, 5% of rape victims of reproductive age (age 12-45) became pregnant as a result of rape, with the majority of pregnancies in adolescents and of these: 5.9% placed the child for adoption, 32.2% kept the child, 50% terminated the pregnancy, 11.8% miscarried; and

WHEREAS, the rights of a parent may be terminated based on the standard of proof of clear and convincing evidence, a higher standard of proof than other family law issues and no criminal conviction is required in other cases involving terminating parental rights as a result of conduct that is also classified as criminal, such as child abuse; and

WHEREAS, only 2.2% of rapes result in conviction and incarceration, yet in nearly half the states that have legislation meant to prevent rapists from claiming parental rights, a victim may still be forced to interact with the person who raped her if the State did not obtain a conviction in her case.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will vigorously advocate for the enactment or strengthening of local, state and federal legislation that addresses the issue of parental rights and custody of children conceived as a result of sexual assault; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports legislative measures that seek to protect vulnerable mothers and children from harm and that promote their mental, physical and emotional wellbeing; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will, partner and collaborate with organizations that provide mental health, legal and advocacy assistance to sexual assault survivors who wish to end the parental rights of rapists when their child was conceived through rape and a court has made a finding that the rape occurred based on clear and convincing evidence.

*Submitted by: Maryland State Social Action Committee for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **ECONOMIC SECURITY—UPDATED NOVEMBER 2018**

### **1. A RESOLUTION ON PAY EQUITY FOR WOMEN—2008**

WHEREAS, in 1963, when the Equal Pay Act was signed, women made 59 cents on average for every dollar earned by men (based on Census figures of median wages of full-time, year-round workers). By 2006, women earn 77 cents to the dollar, a narrowing of the wage gap by less than half a cent a year; While this number has increased in 2018 to 80.5 cents to every dollar a man makes women are still making over \$10,000 less than their male counterparts annually, and

WHEREAS, over a working lifetime, this wage disparity costs the average American woman and her family \$700,000 to \$2 million in lost wages, impacting Social Security benefits, pensions and retirement; and

WHEREAS, the wage gap is generally worse for most women of color. Latinas earn approximately 59 cents and African-American women earn approximately 72 cents for every dollar men earn; and

WHEREAS, although women's earnings have been slowly catching up to men's over time, the National Committee on Pay equity (NCPE) tells us that this reduction in the wage gap is in part due to a fall in men's earnings rather than an increase in women's earnings; and

WHEREAS, the wage gap exists, in part, because many women and people of color are still segregated into a few low-paying occupations. More than half of all women workers hold sales, clerical and service jobs. Studies show that the more an occupation is dominated by women or people of color, the less it pays; and

WHEREAS, part of the wage gap results from differences in education, experience or time in the workforce, the oppressive immobility to rise in career achievement, a significant portion cannot be explained by any of those factors; the General Accounting Office's Oct. 2003 report "Women's Earnings," which examined 18 years of data, found a 20 percent earnings gap between women and men that could not be explained, even when accounting for demographic and work-related factors such as occupation, industry, race, marital status and job tenure. This gap is attributable to discrimination; certain jobs pay less simply because they are held by women and people of color; and

WHEREAS, A vast majority of households depend on wages of a working mother and working families are often just one paycheck away from hardship; Furthermore, while 49 states have equal pay laws, there is no evidence supporting women making an equal pay as men in any state in the United States of America;

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. has been committed to action in response to discrimination and issues of gender and racial inequities since its founding in 1913;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is committed to eliminating the wage gap in America; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will urge its members to support legislation that would ensure effective remedies for wage discrimination, as well as, address and eliminate the disparity of women in the highest level of career achievement through legislation and address the persistent problem of paying lower wages in fields dominated by women and people of color.

*Submitted by the Fort Worth Alumnae Chapter for consideration at the 2008 National Convention.*

## **2. VULTURE FUND RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, a "vulture fund" is a private company that buys up the debt of poor countries at a big discount from the original owner with the purpose of suing the indebted country in court once it has some money (often after debt cancellation); and

WHEREAS, the actions of several unethical vulture funds are threatening to undo many of the hard-won gains of the international campaign for international debt cancellation that allows impoverished countries to free up funds to improve health and living standards; and

WHEREAS, this practice comes at the expense of the citizens of these indebted countries -some of the most impoverished people in the world -as well as taxpayers in countries like the United States, who bear part of the cost; and

WHEREAS, the issue of "vulture funds" continues to remain prevalent and detrimental in 2018 there are a number of countries that continue to face crippling debt in Africa and throughout the world due to lack of legislation. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the approximate number of people living on less than a dollar a day has actually increased since 1990. If current trends are not reversed, Africa will be the only region in the world where there will be more poor people in 2015 than there were in 1990. Debt cancellation gives impoverished countries a chance to start fresh and spend more money on health, education, and other essential social services; and

WHEREAS, debt cancellation gives impoverished countries a chance to start fresh and spend more money on health, education, and other essential social services; and

WHEREAS, while countries and international organizations have been giving some countries debt relief, "vulture funds," which make huge profits at the expense of the citizens of these indebted countries often undermine any benefits that debt relief may have brought; and

WHEREAS, Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) are particularly vulnerable to vulture funds which purchase the defaulted debts of HIPC countries at much-reduced prices and litigate against the debtor for inflated sums, often in U.S. or English courts, making huge profits on the backs of the world's poorest citizens; and

WHEREAS, a 2007 report on vulture funds by the International Monetary Fund showed that 11 of 24 heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) were involved in litigation worth a total of about \$1 billion on original claims of \$427 million. Additionally, the average recovery rates of vulture funds have averaged to about 3 to 20 times their investments. Now Liberia, a country emerging from decades of devastating civil war, faces the possible threat of vulture lawsuits as it tries to clear up its illegitimate debt with the international community, and

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is committed to the continued support of the continent of Africa; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is committed to stopping the actions of unethical vulture funds; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will advocate for legislation that would prohibit U.S. citizens from engaging in debt profiteering at the expense of another nation and would prohibit any U.S. court from issuing a judgment which would further sovereign debt profiteering.

*Submitted by Fort Worth Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

### **3. ELIMINATION OF INEQUITABLE CREDIT PRACTICES**

WHEREAS, the economic downturn of 2007 left many African Americans facing years of severe unemployment with unemployment rates at 13.6 percent. However, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports in 2018 that this number has diminished to 6.3%. Nonetheless, it is proven that while this number shows more African Americans are employed the attention must shift to other barriers that must be eradicated in the constant pursuit of abolishing any policy or practice that compromises equal success opportunities to all citizens. These barriers being: foreclosures (1.1 million in 2012), bankruptcies (1.22 million in 2012), and other financial issues (13 million lost their jobs during the recession). Additionally, the aforementioned barriers such as job loss have had lasting negative impacts on African Americans credit and/or their spouse's credit and/or credit history and; the most recent economic downturn has left many African Americans facing years of severe unemployment (average-13.6%, (average 6.3% August 2018) unemployment rate), foreclosures (1.1 million in 2012), bankruptcies (1.22 million filed in 2012) and other financial issues (13 million lost their jobs during the recession) that resulted in negative impacts on their credit and/or their spouse's credit and/or credit history and;

WHEREAS, the Pew Research Center states that the wealth of blacks plunged 53% during the most recent recession. With the average net worth of African-American households at \$4,955—the lowest of any racial group. White Americans have 22 times more wealth than blacks—a gap that nearly doubled during the Great Recession. and;

WHEREAS, Credit Reporting Agencies report that 25% of Americans, which represents an estimated 43.4 million people, have bad credit. For African Americans, bad credit has been systematically implemented by financial systems that disproportionately approve subprime mortgages and conduct credit profiling in black communities. These types of financial inequities have resulted in higher interest rates and a higher cost for money in the African-American community, ushering in a new era of de facto economic segregation and;

WHEREAS, economists, consumer advocates and community leaders believe that black Americans are falling behind due to the recession and studies have shown a persistent gap between the credit scores of white and black Americans only getting wider. Furthermore, while improved access to higher education has served as a stepping stone to acquiring wealth it is not enough to create a level playing field for African Americans to create generational wealth, for this

to happen the aforementioned systemic barriers must be identified and dismantled in financial institutions. As the current state of racial wealth inequalities shows that it will take 228 years for the average black family to acquire the same level of wealth in the United States in a study conducted by The Institute for Policy Studies;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. declares its opposition to and condemnation of the “dual credit market” and inequitable credit practices and calls for a real conversation with financial institutions to discuss steps to end economic segregation and the economic immobility that prevents African Americans from acquiring and sustaining wealth and;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution affirms Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.’s commitment to educate the communities we serve about the perils of modern day financial segregation and to raise awareness about wealth creation in the African-American community.

*Submitted by: Southern Region Social Action Committee for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

#### **4. RESTORING THE HEALTH OF THE HOUSING MARKET IN MINORITY COMMUNITIES**

WHEREAS, ongoing problems in the U.S. housing market continue to impede the economic recovery and financial well-being, especially in minority communities; and

WHEREAS, many Americans, particularly minorities, are still struggling with depressed home values, underwater mortgages and foreclosures relative to sluggish improvement and growth within the housing market; and

WHEREAS, “spillover” losses in communities of color due to depreciating values of nearby properties estimated in upwards of \$371 billion between 2009 and 2012 alone; and

WHEREAS, minority homeowners have been impacted disproportionately in the aftermath of the housing crisis due to the racist predatory lending practices of the big banks; and

WHEREAS, the average African American taking out a prime loan was charged significantly more in broker fees than a similarly qualified Caucasian customer; and

WHEREAS, the odds of a minority applicant being steered into a subprime loan were more than twice as high as those for a non-Hispanic Caucasian borrower with a similar credit rating; and

WHEREAS, borrowers of color were more than 30 percent more likely to receive a higher-rate loan than Caucasian borrowers, even after accounting for differences in risk; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Bank of America (BoA) agreed to pay out \$335 million to settle allegations that Countrywide Financial (purchased by BoA in 2008) discriminated against minority borrowers; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Wells Fargo agreed to pay out \$175 million due to similar allegations; and

WHEREAS, the Independent Foreclosure Review that was established as part of a consent order with federal banking regulators yielded in a \$3.6 million settlement for eligible borrowers who suffered financial injury due to errors and other problems during their home foreclosure process; and

WHEREAS, housing discrimination has accelerated the trend of a yawning wealth gap between whites and people of color; and

WHEREAS, government intervention policies including the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP), the Home Affordable Refinance Program (HARP) and the federal 2014 “Ability to Pay” rule have enacted to assist borrowers.

WHEREAS, in 2018 it is evident that although racism and discrimination may not be overt to potential minority housing market investors, it is a persistent and very prevalent issue in the housing market. It is an oppressive system composed of parts of the United States government, United States banks, and employees of these institutions that perpetuate these strategies of discrete segregation through conspicuous surreptitious acts of racial and financial discrimination that is rarely followed by consequences and,

WHEREAS, 2018 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Fair Housing Act there is still work to be done in legislation across all fifty states that must irrevocably cease housing market discrimination and restore the health of the housing market that would, for the first time in American history, benefit all of its citizens,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., support and work with other like-minded organizations in advocating for the full implementation of all federal laws that have been enacted to assist borrowers impacted by unmerited foreclosures and evictions; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will support and advocate for the prevention/punishment of predatory and prejudicial lending practices by financial institutions.

*Submitted by: Springfield-Decatur Area Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **5. USE OF CREDIT INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYMENT**

WHEREAS, the use of credit information for employment is used a factor in hiring by more than half of employers; and

WHEREAS, 17 states and the District of Columbia have proposed legislation to eliminate or restrict the use of credit information for employment; and

WHEREAS, credit information is not a valid indicator of future job performance; and

WHEREAS, according to National Law Consumer Center, credit checks create great obstacles for qualified job applicants because a worker who is unemployed is likely to not pay bills in a timely fashion impacting credit information; and

WHEREAS, the use of credit information for employment could prevent economic recovery for millions of unemployed Americans; and

WHEREAS, according to a recent study by the Federal Trade Commission, one in five American consumers identified material errors on the credit report; and

WHEREAS, current safeguards in the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act permit a candidate to be informed if their credit information was used as a means to establish hiring eligibility and were not considered because of the credit information; and

WHEREAS, a study conducted by the Federal Reserve Board demonstrated African Americans and Latinos are disproportionately impacted by financial institutions and have lower credit scores than whites; and

WHEREAS, unemployment rates amongst African Americans and Latinos are greater than whites; and

WHEREAS, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has expressed grave concerns that the use of credit information in the hiring process violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is committed to economic justice and empowerment for all Americans; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. urges the United States Congress to enact legislation to prohibit the use of credit information for employment and hiring purposes given its negative and disproportionate impact on job seekers and its disparate impact on African Americans and Latinos.

*Submitted by: Chicago Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **6. REAFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FOR EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN AND INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE**

WHEREAS, in 1983, 1985 and 2008, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. affirmed its commitment to advocate for pay equity for all American workers. In 1988, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. affirmed its commitment to advocate for an increase in the federal minimum wage; and

WHEREAS, recent studies have shown that a gender-based wage gap still exists as it currently takes an American woman one year, three months and two days to earn what a white male earns in one year of work and, in particular, African American and Hispanic women earn approximately 64 cents and 55 cents, respectively, for each dollar earned by white men; and

WHEREAS, female workers comprise the majority of American workers earning minimum wage, currently set by federal law at \$7.25 per hour, and African-American and Hispanic women are nearly twice as likely as white men to work at jobs paying at or below the federal minimum wage, including those in service and "tip-based" industries where the minimum federal wage has remained \$2.13 per hour since 1991; and

WHEREAS, former President Barack H. Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law in 2009, thereby extending an employee's time to sue for alleged acts of wage discrimination. In 2010, former President Obama created the Equal Pay Task Force - comprised of members of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Labor and the Department of Justice - to increase enforcement of existing laws to prevent wage discrimination; and

WHEREAS, since 2010, in cooperation with the Equal Pay Task Force and under the leadership of its Chair, Jacqueline A. Berrien, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has recovered more than \$62.5 million in monetary relief for victims of gender-based wage discrimination and obtained changes to workplace practices regarding wage discrimination that affect more than 250,000 American workers; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 in every state a woman working a minimum wage job with two children will live at or below the poverty line,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. hereby re-affirms its commitment to ending wage discrimination for female workers, and re-affirms its efforts to advocate for an increase in the federal minimum wage; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports the mission of both the Equal Pay Task Force and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to ensure equal pay for equal work and commends reiterates its acknowledgement in support of former President Barack H. Obama and Soror Jacqueline A. Berrien for their leadership and diligent efforts toward ending gender-based wage discrimination; and



BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. once again urges the United States Congress to pass legislation, such as the Fair Paycheck Act and Equal Opportunity Wage Act, designed to eliminate the gender-based wage gap and urges the United States Congress to pass legislation such as the Fair Minimum Wage Act which would raise the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour and raise the minimum wage for service and "tip-based" industries in incremental phases until such wage reaches 70% of the federal minimum standard.

*Submitted by: The Chapters of the New York Metro Area for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **7. PAY EQUITY FOR WOMEN**

WHEREAS, President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law on June 10, 1963, when women were paid an average of \$.59 cents for every dollar men were paid; and

WHEREAS, the wage gap has been persistent. Over fifty years after the passage of the Equal Pay Act, women of all ages, races and education level continue to experience the consequences of unequal pay. Women working full-time are paid an average of \$.80 cents to every dollar a man earns. The pay gap is even greater for African-American women, who earn only \$.64 cents, and Hispanic women earn even less—just \$.56 cents for every dollar earned by a Caucasian man; and

WHEREAS, because women earn less on average than men, women must work longer for the same amount of pay. In 2015, it takes women an extra three months of wages to make up that \$.22 cents difference; and

WHEREAS, AAUW's report *Graduating to a Pay Gap* found an unexplainable seven percent difference in the earnings of male and female college graduates one year after graduation, even after accounting for many factors including college major, occupation, industry, sector, hours worked, workplace flexibility, experience, educational attainment, enrollment status, GPA, college selectivity, age, race/ethnicity, region, marital status, and motherhood; and,

WHEREAS, pay equity is a family issue. Women make up nearly half of the U.S. labor force and are a growing number of the main breadwinners in their families. When women are not paid fairly, not only do they suffer and but also their families. The compensation gap undermines the economic security of a majority of American families; and

WHEREAS, studies show that fair pay strengthen the security of families, and that pay equity is closely linked to poverty eradication; and

WHEREAS, a lifetime of lower pay impacts the economic security of women and their families. It means women have less income to save for retirement and less income counted in a Social Security or pension benefit formula; and

WHEREAS, it has been documented that Americans—particularly women—are likely to retire without sufficient retirement funds; and

WHEREAS, equal pay remains a problem for women in America; and

WHEREAS, on January 23, 2009, during the first days of the 111th Congress, the very first bill that former President Obama signed into law was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which gives employees their day in court to challenge a pay gap, and extended the time period in which employees can bring pay discrimination claims; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 Congress has failed to pass legislation that would give women effective equal pay protections for jobs that are comparable or identical. Former President Obama supported passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act, a bill that updates and strengthens the Equal Pay Act of 1963, and ensure that women are not shortchanged solely because of their gender; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., supports efforts to close the pay gap to ensure that women receive equal pay for comparable and identical work; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., use its influence to encourage Congress to pass legislation, such as the Paycheck Fairness Act, which will aid women in receiving the pay to which they are rightfully entitled.

*Submitted by the Northern Virginia Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **8. PROTECTING SENIOR CITIZENS FROM FINANCIAL ABUSE**

WHEREAS, state Adult Protective Services (APS) agencies show an increasing trend in the reporting of elder abuse. Studies suggest that only one of 10 older adults experiencing abuse did not also report financial abuse; and

WHEREAS, despite the accessibility of APS in all 50 states as well as mandatory reporting laws for elder abuse in most states, an overwhelming number of cases of abuse, neglect, and exploitation go undetected and untreated each year; and

WHEREAS, only 1 in 14 cases of elder abuse ever comes to the attention of authorities. A study of cases of elder abuses in the state of New York found that for every elder abuse case known to programs and agencies, 24 were unknown; and

WHEREAS, major financial exploitation was self-reported at a rate of 41 per 1,000 surveyed, which was higher than self-reported rates of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse or neglect; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. continues its public support in legislative efforts to enact stronger laws to protect elders and the senior community from financial fraud, abuse, and mistreatment; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. urges state and federal legislators to pass laws requiring harsher penalties for those who financially abuse or exploit senior citizens.

*Submitted by the Stone Mountain-Lithonia Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **9. CLOSING THE GENDER DIVERSITY GAP IN AMERICAN CORPORATE LEADERSHIP**

WHEREAS, the gender diversity gap exists within leadership roles and/or positions in the corporate/business sector. The gap exists in the position of CEOs, board members and staff of Fortune 500 companies; and

WHEREAS, research conducted by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) found that women in leadership positions within businesses are a minority; and

WHEREAS, less than five (5) percent of the companies in the Standard and Poor's 500 (S&P 500) index had female chief executive officers; and

WHEREAS, women made up less than five (5) percent of the CEOs of S&P 500 companies. Fewer than three (3) percent of Asian, African-American and Hispanic women are board directors. This disparity is also found at the staff level. Asian, African-American, and Hispanic women make up 17 percent of the workforce in S&P 500 companies but fewer than four (4) percent of them are executive officials and managers. Furthermore, the latest evidence proving this consistent oppression of women within the workforce, and the increasing wage gap as women rise in career achievement comes from data collected from Payscale.com reports in 2018 "The Opportunity Gap". Their data reveals that women and men tend to enter the workforce on individual contributor levels, 74 percent of men and 72 percent of women between the age of 20-29, working similar jobs. Over the course of their career men get promoted to higher level roles at a significantly disproportionate rate than women. By mid-career men are 70 percent more likely to have acquired an executive role than women, and by late career 142 percent more likely to be in VP or C-suite roles. Contrarily, women are more likely to remain in individual contributor careers throughout the course of their career. By mid-career over half of women are still in individual contributor roles at 60 percent compared to men which is a little over half at 52 percent.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated supports efforts to mitigate the gender diversity gap in corporate leadership roles; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated advocates for legislative changes to enhance the balance of power as it relates to fair and equal opportunity to support women in leadership roles and positions; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated advocates for the incorporation of diversity training in all Fortune 500 companies and Standard and Poor's 500 companies, to include the completion of a gap analysis to determine what strategies /initiatives can be implemented to decrease this imbalance in the workplace; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated supports organizations that provide resources for women pursuing leadership roles and positions that include training, counseling, coaching, and mentoring to secure and/or be recommended for non-positional and positional leadership roles.

*Submitted by: Fort Valley Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **10. GENDER PAY EQUITY**

WHEREAS, American women who work full-time year-round are paid only 80 cents for every dollar paid to men; and

WHEREAS, this wage gap translates into a loss of \$10,470 in median earnings every year; and

WHEREAS, over a 40-year career, black women typically earn \$840,040.00 less than white men; Native American women \$934,240.00 less than white men; and Latinas earn \$1 million less than white men; and

WHEREAS, women of color would have to work well into their 80s or 90s in order to catch up to what a white, non-Hispanic male made by age 60; and

WHEREAS, according to Pew Research, even though women have increased their presence in higher-paying jobs traditionally dominated by men such as professional and managerial positions, women as a whole continue to be overrepresented in lower-paying occupations, and this may also contribute to gender differences in pay; and

WHEREAS, as a result of a recent Federal Court ruling from the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit, employers can legally pay women less than men for the same work based on previous differences in the worker's salaries as long as they apply it reasonably and have a business policy to justify it; and

WHEREAS, the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States signed an executive order revoking a 2014 executive order created by President Barack Obama that ensured businesses that receive federal contracts to do a better job of adhering to labor and civil rights laws. As a result of the order by President Donald Trump, businesses are no longer required to provide wage

transparency and can include forced arbitration clauses to resolve sexual harassment claims; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated is an organization of women who are consistently facing and dealing with issues related to wage discrimination based on both gender and race.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated supports initiatives, the passage of local and federal laws, and programs that seek to illuminate the gap in wages paid to women based on gender and race.

*Submitted by: Southern Region Social Action Committee and Alabama Social Action Committee for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE**

### **1. COMMUNITY EDUCATION ON BLOOD DONATIONS AND UNIQUE ETHNIC QUALITIES—2008 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, African-Americans often have subtle differences in red blood cell proteins, making it more likely that an appropriate donor will come from someone with a similar ethnic background; and,

WHEREAS, sickle cell disease affects more than 80,000 people in the U.S. 98% of whom are African American. Sickle cell patients can require frequent blood transfusions throughout their lives; and,

WHEREAS, more than 38,000 blood donations are needed every day because every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood; and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will work to educate the African-American community about the unique requirements for blood because of ethnic differences with Sickle Cell Disease, Diabetes, Prostate Cancer, Lupus, and Bone Marrow Transplants; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will advocate for the voluntary donation of blood by African Americans; and that all local Chapters will work within their local communities to encourage blood donations by African-Americans; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that local Chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will consider making blood donation drives a part of their yearly programming.

*Submitted by Oklahoma Sooner City Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2008 National Convention.*

## **2. THE SILENT EPIDEMIC: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE—2008 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease appears to be more prevalent among African Americans. African Americans are 2 to 3 times more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease than Caucasians; 5.7 million currently have Alzheimer's and it is the fourth leading cause of death among African Americans; and,

WHEREAS, African Americans tend to be diagnosed at a later stage of Alzheimer's disease, limiting the effectiveness of treatments that depend upon early intervention; and

WHEREAS, African Americans are drastically underrepresented in research and current clinical trials of potential treatments for Alzheimer's disease, particularly in trials conducted by drug companies, even though evidence of genetic differences and response to drugs varies significantly by race and ethnicity; and

WHEREAS, African Americans with Alzheimer's disease live on the average 15% longer than Caucasian people who have the disease, requiring extensive and costly long-term care; and

WHEREAS, a cure for Alzheimer's has not yet been discovered and government funding for Alzheimer's research is grossly insufficient; and

WHEREAS, the National Health Institute 2008 budget was lowered by \$760 million from the level approved by Congress, thereby affecting research into all diseases including Alzheimer's, but has however increased funding in recent years to support research into Alzheimer's and dementia, and research has proven that these increases are merely "a drop in the bucket" of the 2 billion to annually increase efforts for prevention and treatment at least through 2025; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will support awareness of the Alzheimer's epidemic in Black communities through the sorority's health initiatives and encourage increased funding for research to prevent the illness through a better understanding of the disease's underlying biology and to determine modifiable risk factors; and form partnerships with others such as, "Us Against Alzheimer's" and the National Alzheimer's Association.

*Submitted by the Chester (SC) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2008 National Convention.*

### **3. AUTISM AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN: ELIMINATING DISPARITIES IN DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT—2008 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, there are disparities in the early detection of autism and delayed treatment for African-American children with African-American children being diagnosed nearly two years after children of all other ethnic groups; and

WHEREAS, African-American children with disabilities often experience inadequate services, low-quality curriculum and instruction with inappropriate practices in both main stream and special education classrooms resulting in overrepresentation, misclassification and disadvantages for African-American children; and

WHEREAS, African-American autistic children have higher rates of misdiagnoses than Caucasian children; and

WHEREAS, there is presently no known cure or one specific treatment for autism, however, with appropriate services and supports, training, and information, African-American children on the autism spectrum can grow, learn and flourish as well as other children; and

WHEREAS, when treatment is begun as early as possible and tailored to the child's unique strengths, weaknesses and needs, the provision of early, intensive, high-quality intervention services is associated with improved outcomes;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that chapter Social Actions Committees contact state and congressional lawmakers to alert them to how disparities in the diagnosis and treatment of autism negatively affects African-American children and the community; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that members and chapters include autism awareness in their programmatic agenda and work to eliminate autism health disparities, funding disparities for treatment of African-American children through legislative and advocacy on local, state, and federal levels to promote timely and appropriate diagnoses and treatment for African-American autistic children.

*Submitted by the Chester (SC) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2008 National Convention.*

#### **4. A RESOLUTION TO ERADICATE NATIONAL HUNGER—2008 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, poverty and hunger increasingly affect approximately 35 million Americans each day; and,

WHEREAS, of this 35 million, approximately eight million are African-Americans; and

WHEREAS, 12 million children go to bed hungry on a daily basis and suffer educationally as a result; and

WHEREAS, one of every six elderly persons does not have enough to eat on a daily basis and lack the income to regularly purchase nutritional items; and

WHEREAS, over 200 food banks across the country that are essential to providing the critical food resources needed to prevent nationwide hunger stand empty; and

WHEREAS, the problem of hunger ultimately affects every area of human life and is the underlying issue in many problems facing society today, including a child's ability to learn, a parent's ability to work, and our nation's ability to produce in times of increasing globalization; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated will support, endorse, and foster partnerships with local food bank organizations in the jurisdiction for each local chapter; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that each chapter will encourage its members to work with organizations in their community to provide and donate nutritional food items to needy families and elderly persons.

*Submitted by the Federal City Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2008 National Convention.*

#### **5. A RESOLUTION TO PETITION CONGRESS FOR NATIONAL HEALTH CARE—2008 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, the United States of America spends 40% more than any other industrialized nation on health care—yet rank behind thirty-seven other countries in health status, according to the World Health Organization; and

WHEREAS, today, forty-seven million Americans are without any or inadequate health insurance coverage; and

WHEREAS, nine million of the uninsured are children; and



WHEREAS, American children are expected to compete academically and physically in a global economy; even though, they may suffer from untreated diseases or injuries, emotional trauma, and mental illnesses; and

WHEREAS, health disparities are compounded by low socioeconomic status. However, for families earning more than \$75,000 a year, only 7 percent are uninsured; however, families with incomes less than \$10,000 the number rises to nearly 36 percent;

WHEREAS, in the present economy, fewer employers are paying health care insurance for the employees, and

WHEREAS, with inadequate or no health care insurance, many preventable conditions are detected late leading to major illnesses and premature deaths; and

WHEREAS, of the 45 million Americans who lack insurance, 80% are hardworking who are employed in low paying jobs or come from working families; and

WHEREAS, without prescription coverage, many Americans must choose between buying food, paying mortgages, or buying medicines; and

WHEREAS, there are over 2 trillion dollars are spent annually for healthcare, millions continue to live without coverage;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta will petition our members of Congress to pass a universal health insurance system so that all Americans will have the quality health care that all deserve.

*Submitted by the Detroit Alumnae Chapter for Presentation at the 2008 National Convention.*

## **6. HEALTH CARE DISPARITY AND ITS EFFECT ON AFRICAN AMERICANS—2008 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, research studies reveal that the health care disparity between African-Americans and the majority of the population in the United States is not only the result of limited access to health care, but also the result of disparate treatment and negative attitudes from health care professionals within the healthcare delivery system; and

WHEREAS, the lack of health insurance is higher among African Americans as compared to the majority population and results in African Americans being disproportionately employed to lower paying full time jobs, part time jobs or unemployed; and

WHEREAS, as a result of low paying jobs and unemployment, many African Americans are underinsured, inadequately insured or have no health insurance coverage at all; and

WHEREAS, research studies indicate the African Americans visit hospital emergency rooms for routine health care issues at a ratio of 4:1, for diabetes related illnesses at a ratio of 4:1 and for hypertension and heart disease at a ratio of 3:1 compared to the majority population; and

WHEREAS, research further reveals that even when African Americans are adequately insured and seek medical services they are not usually offered the same tests, the latest drug therapies or other treatments that are offered to patients of the majority population; and

WHEREAS, medical studies reveal that such disparate treatment in the access and delivery of health care has resulted in both chronic and acute illnesses in African Americans being undiagnosed, misdiagnosed, less aggressively treated, improperly treated or untreated to the detriment of the overall health status of the African-American population in the United States; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the manner in which health care is currently delivered, forty (40%) percent of African Americans who develop diabetes will eventually suffer kidney failure and have to undergo kidney dialysis leading to a diabetes and heart disease related death rate for African Americans that is twice that of the majority population;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will encourage and support the training and hiring of African-American health care professionals to improve diversity within the health care delivery system; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will support letter writing campaigns and meet with local, state and federal legislative officials to establish and fund programs that are designated to eliminate health care disparities in both access and treatment.

*Submitted by the St. Louis Alumnae Chapter for Presentation at the 2008 National Convention.*

## **7. A RESOLUTION ADDRESSING THE LACK OF ENERGY POLICY DRIVING GLOBAL WARMING—2008 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, global warming is the most serious environmental threat facing the planet today, and the consensus among most of the world's scientists hold that we are warming the planet; and

WHEREAS, unless steps are taken now to curb global GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions, our way of life, our planet, and the future of our children will be in grave danger; and,

WHEREAS, to prevent catastrophic global warming/climate change, scientists tell us that we must stabilize the concentration of carbon dioxide pollution in the earth's atmosphere at 450 parts per million but, to reach this target, America needs to cut its CO<sup>2</sup> pollution by 80% by 2050; and this would require that we reduce the GHG by 2% each year if we start now; and,

WHEREAS, cars and light trucks are one of America's largest and fastest sources of global warming pollution accounting for 16% of U.S. global warming emission and having soared by 25% between 1990 and 2005; and,

WHEREAS, the House and Senate did agree upon a final energy bill in December 2007 (Energy Independence and Security Act), that will raise fuel economy standards to 35 mpg by 2020, create energy efficiency standards, and increase our use of renewable fuels; and,

WHEREAS, this version of the bill lacks key components that address our energy security and global warming emissions: a renewable electricity standard (RES) of 15% by 2020 as passed by the House in August, and a tax package that will provide investment incentives for clean energy alternatives;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that in an effort to build on this bill's momentum, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., shall advocate in both the Senate and the House comprehensive global climate and energy legislation to cap and reduce America's global warming pollution and meet the four criteria that:

- Sets a concrete timetable for emission reduction;
- Ensures all forms of heat-trapping global warming pollution are covered;
- Sets new standards for environmentally sound ethanol and other biofuels; and
- Fosters real market competition for next generation energy sources

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that members of local Chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. raise public awareness; educate their communities, and other organizations to support global warming initiatives and save energy at the national, state, and local level that will:

- Make automobiles go further on a gallon of gas;
- Accelerate the use of clean, renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind;
- Increase energy efficiency and conservation; and
- Preserve forests around the world.
- Pass an energy bill consistent with current need for reduction for water and air pollution.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will use its influence to encourage Congress act on legislation that will limit global warming to 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit and avoid the most dangerous impacts of global warming within 10 years. 2008

*Submitted by the South Jersey Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2008 National Convention.*

## **8. GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY—2008 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, taking environmental responsibility in order to develop an awareness will positively affect the global community; and,

WHEREAS, since it is predicted that at least 36 states will experience some water shortage by 2013, taking environmental responsibility will help prevent water shortages and will reduce global warming which has been steadily increasing. The United States produces 23% of the world's global warming pollution, which affects lives beyond US borders and increases global warming which threatens the people, animals and natural resources.

WHEREAS, taking environmental responsibility will lead to the reduction of greenhouse gases and the decrease of natural resources. This gives future generations the same standard of living currently enjoyed and encourages environmental justice to low income world citizens. Nations will be free from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food; and,

WHEREAS, taking environmental responsibility will lead to renewable energy commercialization;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will take environmental responsibility and employ innovative strategies to create awareness within its National, Regional, Local and International Communities. 2008.

*Submitted by the North Dallas Suburban Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2008 National Convention.*

## **9. A RESOLUTION ON THE ERADICATION OF FOOD DESERTS THROUGH THE EXPANSION OF URBAN AGRICULTURAL AND INCREASED ACCESS TO HEALTHY AND AFFORDABLE FOOD—2010 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, a healthy diet is the first step to a healthy life. African Americans have a disproportionately high rate of diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity and other illnesses that are linked to poor nutrition; and

WHEREAS, many African Americans live in urban areas that are "food desserts," or neighborhoods with little or no access to fresh fruits and vegetables needed to maintain a healthy diet. Lack of access to proper nutrition is one reason that many children are not eating the recommended levels of fruits, vegetables and whole grains;

WHEREAS, large supermarket chains often engage in redlining neighborhoods that have large African American or economically-challenged populations. More than 23 million Americans, including 6.5 million children, live in low-income urban areas more than a mile and rural neighborhoods up to ten miles from a supermarket; and

WHEREAS, in many cities where inadequate, unreliable and irregular access to fresh foods is a problem, urban agriculture has been a positive response to tackling food concerns, especially obesity; and

WHEREAS, Former First Lady Michelle Obama recognized the need to actively work to eradicate "food deserts" in her campaign to end childhood obesity; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will actively work to encourage food businesses located in "food deserts" to sell fresh healthy foods at affordable prices, with an emphasis on accessing locally-grown produce; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will promote programs such as urban agriculture, food preparation classes and contests and entrepreneurship that will encourage residents in food deserts to take an active interest in finding ways to provide healthy meals for themselves; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will join with other organizations that sponsor programs that encourage schools and businesses to serve healthy foods in underserved communities; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., supports efforts of other organizations throughout the country that seek to eradicate access barriers to healthy food for African Americans and advocate for the elimination of redlining by supermarket chains.

*Submitted by Federal City Alumnae, North Harris County Alumnae, and North Manhattan Alumnae Chapters for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

## **10. A RESOLUTION FOR BLACK WOMEN AND INFANT MORTALITY—2010 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, black women have long had higher rates of low birth weight and pre-term babies than whites. Low birth weight is the leading cause of infant mortality or death in the first year of life and these differences cannot readily be explained by disparities in the mother's age, education and income. For example, college-and graduate school-educated black mothers have a higher infant mortality rate than white mothers who are high school dropouts; WHEREAS, the black infant mortality rate is 340 per one thousand vs. white infants which is 217 per one thousand; and

WHEREAS, black women who get prenatal care in the first trimester have double the infant mortality rate of white mothers with first-trimester care; and

WHEREAS, black women with similar levels of prenatal care as Hispanic women (generally less educated and with lower incomes than blacks) have higher rates of low birth weight, preterm deliveries, and infant mortality; and

WHEREAS, this medical paradox of infant mortality and black women requires further study and research into the causes of and solutions for increased infant mortality in the black community; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. support the expansion of medical research into the causes of infant mortality in black women; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., support efforts of other organizations throughout the country that seek to reduce the rate of infant mortality in black women and to educate black women on health practices that promote reduction of infant mortality and birth defects.

*Submitted by Fort Worth Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

## **11. A RESOLUTION COMBATING CHILDHOOD OBESITY—2010 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, childhood obesity is a serious problem in the United States, putting children and adolescents at risk for poor health; and

WHEREAS, the rate of obesity for children and adolescents aged 2-19 years old is 18.5% and affects approximately 13.7 million children; and

WHEREAS, Obesity disproportionately affects children of low-income families; and

WHEREAS, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a number of factors including genetic, behavioral, and environmental factors contribute to childhood obesity. It is the interactions among these factors rather than any single factor that is thought to cause obesity; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data indicates that obesity is prevalent among low-income, preschool-aged children and that one of seven low-income, preschool aged children is obese; and

WHEREAS, children and adolescents that are obese may experience immediate health related consequences such as cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 Diabetes, sleep apnea, asthma and liver damage; and

WHEREAS, 80 percent of children who are overweight at 10 to 15 years old will be obese at 25. Hence, overweight children and adolescents are more likely to become obese adults; and

WHEREAS, the goals of Delta Academy and Delta GEMS programs aim to help *young* females develop higher self-esteem through enrichment, self-reflection and individual growth; and

WHEREAS, Former First Lady Michelle Obama, the CDC and other health related organizations issued the call to combat childhood obesity through activities such as the "Let's Move" Campaign to help promote healthy foods and increased physical activity; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., continues to endorse and advocate for increased physical activities and recreational programs to combat the childhood obesity epidemic with an emphasis on healthy food options as well; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that all Chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., engage communities, governmental entities and nonprofit organizations in the battle to combat childhood obesity.

*Submitted by Chester (SC) Alumnae, Florence Alumnae (SC), Kappa Zeta and Minneapolis/51. Paul Alumnae chapters for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

## **12. A RESOLUTION ON WATER POLLUTION AND ITS NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON THE BLACK COMMUNITY—2010 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, 40% of America's rivers and 46% of America's lakes are too polluted for fishing, swimming, or aquatic life, and in any given year, about 25% of beaches in the US are under advisories or are closed at least one time because of water pollution; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi River which drains nearly 40% of the continental United States, including its central farm lands-carries an estimated 1.5 million metric tons of nitrogen pollution into the Gulf of Mexico each year, and the resulting hypoxic coastal dead zone in the Gulf each summer is about the size of the state of Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, two-thirds of the U.S. estuaries and bays are either moderately or severely degraded from eutrophication (nitrogen and phosphorus pollution), and two of South Louisiana's estuaries, the Barataria and Terrebonne basins, are the most rapidly eroding estuaries on earth. Since the erosion began, Louisiana has lost a total of 2,000 square miles of wetlands, 1.2 million acres. To put this into perspective, the loss of Louisiana wetlands since 1900 is equivalent to the size of 42.5 cities of San Francisco. Compared to previous decades, the loss rate now is even more rapid, approximately 25-30 square miles of Louisiana's wetlands disappears each year; and



WHEREAS, 1.2 trillion gallons of untreated sewage, storm water, and industrial waste are discharged into U.S. waters annually, and the U.S. E.P.A. has warned that sewage levels in rivers could be back to the super-polluted levels of the 1970s by the year 2016; and

WHEREAS, There are 600 hundred thousand miles of sewer pipes across the U.S. with an average age of 33 years and some pipes in cities are nearly 200 hundred years old, even made of wood, and the Society of Civil Engineers has given America's waste water "D" grade overall; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority will adopt ecofriendly practices and advocate for policies designed to eradicate water pollution specifically within urban centers.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority will partner with the Environmental Defense Fund, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Urban Greenspace Institute to correct the ills within the water environment within the United States of America.

*Submitted by Cary Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

### **13. A RESOLUTION FOR INCREASING CARE PROVIDERS IN THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY—2010 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, the lack of primary care providers in the African-American community is contributing to unequal access to healthcare and ultimately health disparities; and

WHEREAS, the demand for primary care providers is expected to rise exponentially due to the recent passage of health care reform legislation; and

WHEREAS, the estimated shortage of primary care physicians is expected to exceed 46,000 by 2020; and

WHEREAS, fewer medical students are choosing careers as primary care providers; and

WHEREAS, fewer medical students are pursuing careers in primary care practice because primary care providers are paid significantly less than medical specialists; and

WHEREAS, loan repayment for medical school and increased costs of living prevent medical students from being primary care providers, especially in the African-American community; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports efforts designed to increase the number of medical students seeking careers as primary care providers.



BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. will work with the appropriate organizations and government agencies to provide chapters with accurate information and advocacy opportunities to support increasing primary care providers in the African-American community.

*Submitted by North Harris County Alumnae Chapter For presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

#### **14. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY—2013 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, the net per capita discard rate (after recycling, composting, and combustion for energy recovery) was 2.40 pounds per person per day, lower than the 2.51 per capita rate in 1960, when virtually no recycling occurred in the United States; and

WHEREAS, while the number of U.S. landfills has steadily declined over the year the average landfill size has increased; and

WHEREAS, approximately 71 million tons of paper and paperboard are used each year in the United States; and

WHEREAS, paper makes up nearly 30 percent of all wastes Americans throw away each year, more than any other material; and

WHEREAS, every year, Americans use approximately one billion shopping bags, creating 300,000 tons of landfill waste; and

WHEREAS, plastic bags do not biodegrade and less than one percent of them are recycled each year; and

WHEREAS, 827,000 to 1.3 million tons of plastic PET water bottles are produced in the U.S. each year, 76.5 percent of these bottles ended up in landfills; and

WHEREAS, recycling one ton of mixed paper saves the energy equivalent of 185 gallons of gasoline and recycling one ton of aluminum cans conserves more than 207 million Btu (the equivalent of 36 barrels of oil or 1,665 gallons of gasoline); and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated recommends that certified vendors at sorority events (e.g., National Conventions, Regional Conferences, Founders Day Programs, etc.) provide plastic bags to customers only upon request; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated provide plastic bag recycling at every sorority event with vendors (e.g., National Conventions, Regional Conferences, Founders Day Programs, etc.); and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated chapters recycle at least 20 percent of all paper and plastic waste generated at chapter events (e.g., chapter meetings, programs, and fundraisers).

*Submitted by: Stone Mountain-Lithonia Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **15. MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AND THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY—2013 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a devastating disease that affects people of all races, including African Americans; and

WHEREAS, MS research over the past 10 years has examined patterns of the disease, MRI findings, and prognosis in Caucasian versus African-American populations with MS; and

WHEREAS, we know that MS is not directly inherited, but genetics plays a role in the susceptibility to the disease. Multiple genes have been identified that are associated with increased risk of MS; and

WHEREAS, the incidence was lower in African Americans, which raises the question as to whether genetic or environmental factors are at the forefront; and

WHEREAS, many of the clinical trials examining etiologies and therapies suffer from a great lack of African-American participation. MS in African Americans may be due partially to environmental factors and mixing of races, which plays some role in African Americans having more involvement of the optic nerves and spinal cord than their Caucasian counterparts; and

WHEREAS, clinical studies have shown that for African Americans, the median time to chart MS diagnosis and MS onset to treatment was significantly shorter for African Americans compared with the Caucasians, due to the probability of a lack of health care access; and

WHEREAS, the disease takes a more aggressive course in African Americans with increased relapses and shorter time to ambulatory disability and low vitamin D levels are another risk factor for developing MS, African Americans tend to become disabled faster, having to rely on canes and wheelchairs.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports the National Multiple Sclerosis Society chapters nationwide to raise the awareness of MS in the African-American communities; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. provide legislative support to seek creative federal policy solutions to the challenges facing people living with MS and their

family caregivers by engaging their Congressmen to join and support the Congressional MS Caucus; who raise awareness about MS on Capitol Hill and together; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that all chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. engage communities, governmental entities and nonprofit organizations to raise awareness of the impact of MS in African-American Communities.

*Submitted by: Columbia (MD) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **16. COMBATING SICKLE CELL DISEASE/TRAIT**

WHEREAS, Sickle Cell Disease is a hereditary blood disorder that is global in nature and primarily affects people of African and Mediterranean descent; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations recognized Sickle Cell as one of the world's most lethal and prevalent genetic diseases when it issued a resolution in December of 2008 declaring June 19, 2009 and every year forward as World Sickle Cell Day; and

WHEREAS, 1 in 10 blacks in the United States has the Sickle Cell Trait and 1 in 1 in 500 have Sickle Cell Disease. According to Dr. Michael Dowling at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, 10% of children with sickle cell disease suffer a stroke; and

WHEREAS, persons who inherit the sickle gene from only one parent have sickle cell trait (not disease) and have been known to develop symptoms of the disease under certain conditions and circumstances. "Exertional Sickling" has been cited by news agencies such as CBS Sports.com and CNN as the leading cause of death this decade among athletes often due to lack of body conditioning before engaging in strenuous exercise; and

WHEREAS, very few medications have been approved by the Federal Drug Administration for the treatment of sickle cell and there is no universal cure for this extremely painful, debilitating disease that affects all organs of the body; and

WHEREAS, The Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, The Mayo Clinic, the CDC and other research institutions are providing a coordinating approach to addressing issues related to sickle cell including the search for a cure; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. recognizes the potential destruction of this disease and supports the work of organizations and institutions and the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America in efforts to find a universal cure, funding and treatment.

*Submitted by: West Palm Beach Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **17. PROHIBITING THE USE OF MENTHOL AS A CHARACTERIZING FLAVOR IN CIGARETTES**

WHEREAS, tobacco use is the foremost preventable cause of premature death among African Americans, claiming 45,000 African American lives a year, killing more African Americans than violence, AIDS, and car accidents COMBINED;

WHEREAS, according to the 2012 Surgeon General Report on the prevention of tobacco use, adolescent and young adult smokers smoke menthol cigarettes at a higher percentage than any other age group and menthol cigarettes are especially popular among Black youth who smoke; and

WHEREAS, the use of menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes contributes to the overall burden of tobacco-related disease among African Americans, and 67% of overall health disparities in mortality are related to the high smoking prevalence of African-American men; and

WHEREAS, menthol cigarettes are cheaper in poor communities and in communities with a greater concentration of African Americans and are more likely to be marketed in stores near schools with higher proportions of African-American students; and

WHEREAS, the tobacco industry has a well-documented history of targeting African Americans with “culturally friendly” advertising of menthol cigarettes, resulting in nearly 83% of African-American smokers smoking menthol cigarettes (compared to 24% of white smokers); and

WHEREAS, the tobacco manufacturers add menthol to cigarettes to mask the harsh taste of tobacco and alleviate the irritating effects of nicotine, making menthol cigarettes particularly attractive to kids. Youths experimenting with menthol cigarettes are at far greater risk of becoming regular, life-long smokers than those who experiment with non-menthol cigarettes; and

WHEREAS, 75.8% of African Americans support the elimination of menthol cigarettes and 44.5% of African-American menthol smokers report they would quit smoking if menthol cigarettes were prohibited; and

WHEREAS, the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, signed into law by President Barack Obama in June 2009 to prevent the uptake of tobacco by youth, gave the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the authority to regulate tobacco products and the FDA is currently reviewing information about menthol cigarettes and deciding what, if any, action to take; and,

WHEREAS, the Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee (TPSAC) was mandated by law to produce a report and recommendations to the FDA on the public health impact of menthol cigarettes, including its use among children and racial and ethnic minorities. The TPSAC report

concluded that “Removal of menthol cigarettes from the marketplace would benefit public health in the United States;” and

WHEREAS, prohibiting the use of menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes could prevent as many as 600,000 smoking-related premature deaths by 2050, a third of whom would be African American; and

WHEREAS, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, American Public Health Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Americans for Nonsmokers’ Rights, NAATPN, and many others support a ban on the use of menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes; and

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. is committed to the health and well-being of the African-American community.

THEREFORE, BE IT NOW RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. requests that the FDA add menthol to the list of characterizing flavors that are prohibited as constituents or additives of cigarettes.

*Submitted by: Berkeley Bay Area Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **18. INCREASED AWARENESS OF PULMONARY SARCOIDOSIS AND EXPANDED RESEARCH FUNDING FOR THE DISEASE**

WHEREAS, pulmonary sarcoidosis is a disease that causes inflammation of the lungs in which tiny abnormal tissue clumps form in the lungs; and

WHEREAS, pulmonary sarcoidosis primarily affects the lungs in 90% of cases, however any organ can be affected; and

WHEREAS, the actual cause of sarcoidosis is unknown, and it is more common in African Americans than Caucasians and usually starts between the ages of 20-40 years old; and

WHEREAS, since African Americans are the most affected group in the United States, the chance of developing sarcoidosis can be as high as two percent.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will advocate for increased awareness and research of pulmonary sarcoidosis; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will spearhead a letter writing campaign to our state and federal public officials in order to increase funding for research to acquire knowledge of the cause and possible prevention of sarcoidosis.

*Submitted by: South Jersey Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **19. PULSE OXIMETRY NEWBORN TESTING**

WHEREAS, pulse oximetry in newborns is a non-invasive screening test to measure oxygen levels in blood. When performed on a newborn when the baby is 24 to 48 hours of age, it is effective at detecting critical, life-threatening congenital heart defects which otherwise may go undetected by current screening methods; and

WHEREAS, many newborn lives could potentially be saved by earlier detection and treatment of congenital heart disease (CHD). About 1 in 100 babies is born with CHD and many are not detected until after discharge, which can lead to developmental delays or even death; and

WHEREAS, only 13 states in the nation have enacted CHD screening laws on newborns as of January 2013; and

WHEREAS, the CDC reports that congenital heart defects (CHDs) account for nearly 30% of infant deaths due to birth defects In the United States, about 7,200 (or 18 per 10,000) babies born every year have critical congenital heart defects (CCHDs, which also are known as critical congenital heart disease).

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. applauds the Department of Health and Human Service and Secretary Kathleen Sebelius for their endorsement of this screening in newborns and support of other efforts to improve the health of infants; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. joins the American Heart Association, March of Dimes, American Academy of Pediatrician and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in our support of state and federal legislative efforts to mandate the screening of newborns prior to discharge; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc urges national and state legislatures to enact laws to mandate pulse oximetry screening of newborns to detect CCHD as early as possible.

*Submitted by: Oklahoma Sooner City Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **20. REAFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE ELIMINATION AND ERADICATION OF MALARIA IN AFRICA**

WHEREAS, malaria is a leading cause of death and disease in many developing countries, despite being preventable and treatable; and

WHEREAS, 35 countries, the majority of which are in sub-Saharan Africa, account for 91 percent of malaria deaths in the world; and

WHEREAS, young children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to and disproportionately affected by malaria. Malaria greatly affects child health, as children under the age of 5 account for an estimated 86 percent of malaria deaths each year; and

WHEREAS, President Obama's Malaria Initiative focuses on helping partner countries achieve major improvements in overall health outcomes through improved access to, and quality of, healthcare services in locations with limited resources; and

WHEREAS, the President's Malaria Initiative, supports the objectives of World Malaria Day, including the elimination and eradication of malaria by 2015; and

WHEREAS, the President's Malaria Initiative, recognizing the burden of malaria on many partner countries, has set a target of reducing the burden of malaria by 50 percent for 450,000,000 people, representing 70 percent of the at-risk population in Africa, by 2015.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will vigorously support national, state or local legislation, campaigns, and initiatives focused on efforts to eliminate and eradicate malaria in Africa; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta supports the goals and ideals of World Malaria Day, including the target of ending malaria deaths by 2015; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. commends the recent progress made toward reducing global malaria morbidity, mortality, and prevalence, particularly through the efforts of the President's Malaria Initiative and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports ongoing public-private partnerships to research and develop more effective and affordable tools for malaria diagnosis, treatment, and vaccination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports the goals, priorities, and authorities to combat malaria set forth in the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-293; 122 Stat. 2918); and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. encourages its members and chapters to sustain and increase their support for and financial contributions to efforts to combat malaria worldwide.

H.R. 6176 INTRODUCED 9.13.18 by Rep. Nadler to update technical provisions of the Lantos and Hyde Reauthorization Act of 2008.

*Submitted by: Fort Worth Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*



## **21. SEPSIS AWARENESS**

WHEREAS, sepsis is a common infection that can be treated successfully with early and aggressive therapy; and

WHEREAS, 40% of adult Americans are unaware of the causes, symptoms, and treatment and the fatal results if the condition is untreated; and

WHEREAS, more than 200,000 patients die every year in the United States and more than half a million persons die globally from this medical emergency; and

WHEREAS, armed with information about the infection, care givers can ensure that their loved ones receive urgent and aggressive therapy in order to decrease mortality rates and to shorten hospital stays.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta supports efforts to educate Americans about the causes, symptoms and treatment of sepsis.

*Submitted by: Chester (SC) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **22. SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS (SLE) AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN**

WHEREAS, Systemic Lupus Erythematosus is an autoimmune disease which the immune system produces antibodies within the body leading to widespread inflammation and tissue damage. 1.5 million American and 5 million worldwide have a form of lupus. Lupus is one the cruelest, most mysterious diseases on earth; and

WHEREAS, according to the Lupus Foundation of America (LFA), a number of factors including genetics (heredity), hormones and environment contribute to lupus. Lupus can be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms mimic those of other diseases. More than half of those afflicted with lupus suffer for at least four years, and saw three or more doctors before obtaining a correct diagnosis of lupus; and

WHEREAS according to the Lupus Foundation of America, lupus occurs three times more frequently in African-American women than Caucasian women, and that African-American women develop more severe symptoms. No two cases are alike, with symptoms that include fatigue, pain, swelling, hair loss, and skin rashes. The clinical manifestation affects joints, skin, brain, lungs, kidneys and blood vessels; and

WHEREAS, lupus can strike anyone. 90 percent of the cases are women and most develop signs and symptoms between the ages of 15 to 44 that last a lifetime. Death rates were highest and increased the most over time among black women aged 45-64 years; and



WHEREAS, The Lupus Foundation of America has issued a call to help combat lupus through its "Help us Solve the Cruel Mystery" campaign. The campaign's goals include increasing funding for more research and raising public awareness of the disease.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., endorses the Lupus Foundation of America's " Help us Solve the Cruel Mystery" campaign and other organizational and governmental efforts to increase lupus awareness, research, early diagnosis and treatment, which are crucial to preventing long-term consequences of this brutal disease.

- The Help Us Solve the Cruel Mystery is an on-going campaign slogan of the Foundation
- Ask Alumnae chapters to connect with LFA chapters across the country
- Hold joint sessions about impact upon African American and low-income women of all races and ethnicities

*Submitted by: Cincinnati Alumnae (OHI) Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

### **23. THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY ADDICTION ON PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH**

WHEREAS, mental health experts have identified technology addiction as a serious health crisis. Technology addiction - or the obsession to be connected - has been found to lead to headaches, stress, insomnia, and neck, back and wrist pain; and

WHEREAS, technology addiction is increasingly being considered a factor in unstable mental health and radical social behavior; and

WHEREAS, technology addiction can be disruptive to relationships with family and friends; can be distracting in work situations and can be the cause of lack of attention to safety; and

WHEREAS, the internet is a major vehicle for the dissemination of anti-American rhetoric, which has led to attacks that have resulted in the destruction of American lives and property.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports efforts to educate the public about the dangers of obsessive and abusive use of technology and strategies to regain a healthy balance for its productive use.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT Delta Sigma Theta calls on Congress to fund research from the CDC on Social Media Addiction in adolescents and linkages to suicide, depression, and low self esteem

There are now assessments to gauge reliance on technology: Compulsive Internet Use Scale, Mobile Phone Problematic Use Scale, Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale, and the Multidimensional Facebook Intensity Scale

As of *Psychology Today's* reporting in 2017, there is no formal diagnosis of Social Media Disorder in the DSM-V, which is resident guide for mental disorders.

*Submitted by: Chester (SC) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **24. COMBATING DIABETES: A GLOBAL EPIDEMIC**

WHEREAS, diabetes is a global epidemic with 387 million people diagnosed worldwide and an estimated increase to 592 million diagnosed by 2035; and

WHEREAS, every seven seconds a person dies from diabetes. An estimated 4.9 million deaths that were directly caused by the disease in 2014; and

WHEREAS, more than 80 percent of diabetes-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries with a high prevalence of diabetes existing among minority populations; and

WHEREAS, the prevalence of this disease increases in people who are overweight or obese. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that more than 1.9 billion adults worldwide are overweight and of these over 600 million are obese; and

WHEREAS, 1 in 2 people living with diabetes do not know they have it; and

WHEREAS, the global economic burden of diabetes was \$612 billion in 2014;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. reaffirms its commitment to educate local communities on prevention methods and the management of diabetes, and to promote healthy lifestyles with the goal of reducing the growing global problem of overweight and obesity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. encourages its members to contribute to and collaborate with established associations that advocate for the treatment and eradication of diabetes, support groups and other related organizations; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that all chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will reach out to policy makers to advocate for better health resource provisions for improving the well-being of those afflicted with diabetes and advocate for adequate funding allocated to diabetes research.

*Submitted by the Grand Bahama Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention*

## **25. THE IMPACT OF UTERINE FIBROIDS ON THE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH OF WOMEN OF COLOR**

WHEREAS, uterine fibroids are the most common non-cancerous tumors in women of childbearing age. These tumors grow within the walls of the uterus either as a single large mass or multiple masses; and

WHEREAS, African-American women are three to five times more likely to develop fibroids than women of other racial groups and suffer the most complications; and

WHEREAS, African-American women disproportionately experience the health issues, quality of lifestyle disruptions and medical, emotional and economical challenges; and

WHEREAS, what causes fibroids is unknown and while many women who have fibroids don't feel any symptoms, fibroids can cause heavy bleeding, anemia, abdominal pain, and reproductive problems, such as, infertility and miscarriages; and

WHEREAS, more than 200,000 hysterectomies are performed in the U.S. each year for fibroids. It is the second most common surgical procedure for women after Cesarean sections. African-American women are 25% more likely to have hysterectomies than white women; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., affirms its commitment to uterine fibroid education campaigns that will assist in eliminating the gaps in health care disparities; and improve the overall quality of life for African-American women; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. calls upon other organizations in the African-American health care community to conduct similar campaigns and education on the options for quality outcomes; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. calls upon lawmakers at every level of government to fully fund programs for research and propose holistic and community-based educational training programs and prevention efforts for this reproductive health issue.

*Submitted by the Nassau (NY) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **26. INCREASING THE AWARENESS OF SUICIDE RISKS AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES**

WHEREAS, mental health issues in the African-American communities continue to be stigmatized, misunderstood and under diagnosed; and

WHEREAS, African-American communities continue to be underserved by the nation's mental health system, and barriers remain in access to and quality of care; and

WHEREAS, African Americans tend to rely on family members, religious and social communities for emotional support, and ignore mental health symptoms that need to be treated rather than utilizing health care professionals; and

WHEREAS, 63% of African Americans continue to believe that depression is a personal weakness; and

WHEREAS, African Americans tend to seek psychological services at a lower rate than other ethnic groups; and

WHEREAS, due to the lack of treatment a false belief has developed in the African-American community that Black people do not commit suicide; and

WHEREAS, suicide is the third and fourth leading cause of death for African-American teenagers and young adults; and

WHEREAS, the incidence of black suicides is increasing not decreasing; and

WHEREAS, suicide rates increased 233% among African-American children ages 10 to 14 over a 15-year span, and

WHEREAS, other effects of untreated mental illness include higher rates of substance abuse, domestic violence and physical health issues all of which negatively impact the community; and

WHEREAS, the media projections coupled with the daily lives of many citizens in African-American communities across the nation in relation to tragedy, murder, racism, war and socioeconomic deprivation negatively impacts the psyches of many; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that all chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. work to raise awareness of psychological issues related to suicide, depression and other mental health conditions, engage communities in education and the access to services to aid in diagnosis and care; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports education, assessment of services and addressing the need for improved mental health services for African-American communities.

Update: According to a 2018 report in the Journal of American Medical Association, suicide rates for Black children 5- 12 years of age is twice that of white children; and then it is the inverse between 12-17

There is a lack of research on black youth suicide factors.

*Submitted by the Pomona Valley Alumnae and Springfield Decatur Area Alumnae Chapters for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **27. PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

WHEREAS, every year more than 3 million reports of child abuse are made in the United States involving more than 6 million children; and

WHEREAS, the United States has one of the worst records among industrialized nations; losing on average between four and seven children every day to child abuse and neglect; and

WHEREAS, referrals to state child protective services involve 6.3 million children annually with approximately 3 million of those children becoming subject to an investigated report; and

WHEREAS, 80% of 21-year olds who reported childhood abuse tested positive for at least one psychological disorder. Approximately two-thirds of individuals in treatment for drug abuse reported being abused or neglected as children; and

WHEREAS, more than 70% of the children who died as a result of child abuse or neglect were two years of age or younger; and

WHEREAS, abused children are 25% more likely to experience teen pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, children who experience child abuse and/or neglect are 59% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile, 28% more likely to be arrested as an adult, and 30% more likely to commit violent crime; and

WHEREAS, it is critical for all people to recognize the signs of child neglect and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, including sudden changes in behavior or school performance and untreated physical or medical issues. Reporting any concerns could protect a child and connect a family with the help they need; and

WHEREAS, that a strong, stable family is the best foundation for a promising childhood, and when parents and caregivers have family and community support, they are more likely to provide safe and healthy environments for children; and

WHEREAS, that children are our most valuable asset and entitled to the fundamental human right to live free from violence and abuse; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. stands ready to garner and support efforts on the local, regional and national level to prevent child abuse in the communities in which we live, work and thrive; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports the enactment of legislation and adequate funding to implement responsible programs for the prevention, detection and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

- Perpetual Resolution – continued advocacy of policies and legislation that combats childhood abuse and neglect
- Should demand that the ACF of the HHS continue to issue its annual reports on Child Maltreatment. It hasn't done so since 2016

*Submitted by the East St. Louis Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **28. PROMOTION OF CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATIONS**

WHEREAS, during the lifetimes of children born in the United States between 1994 and 2013, vaccinations will prevent an estimated 322 million illnesses, 21 million hospitalizations, and 732,000 deaths. Reaching and maintaining high immunization coverage across state and socioeconomic groups is needed to prevent resurgence of vaccine- preventable diseases; and

WHEREAS, vaccine-preventable diseases, illnesses and deaths among children who are 19-35 months of age could be eliminated or greatly decreased by interventions to improve parental knowledge about vaccines, highlighting the availability and accessibility of no- cost vaccines at local state health departments. Research reveals absolutely no link between autism and MMR vaccine; and

WHEREAS, The Healthy People 2020 Initiative has set an 80 percent vaccination rate target for the following vaccines by 2020: 4 DTaP, 3 IPV, 1 MMR, 3 Hib, 3 HepB and 1 Varicella by age 2; and

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports the Healthy People 2020 Initiative for childhood vaccinations, along with American Academy of Pediatrics and The Center for Disease Control and Prevention to prevent childhood illness by encouraging and supporting “Immunizations on time and every time” for unvaccinated children unless contraindicated; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. and each local chapter work with state agencies and others to provide education in their communities regarding the value and importance of immunizing children on time. Skipping immunizations has put children across the country at risk for diseases such as flu, whooping cough and measles; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will make a concerted effort to work with local health departments to spread educational information about the critical role of childhood immunizations in preventing the spread of preventable diseases.

*Submitted by the Oklahoma Sooner City Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **29. CALLING FOR FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION TO COMBAT OBESITY**

WHEREAS, obesity has been an epidemic for decades in the United States. Results from the 2007-2008 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) show that 68 percent of U.S. adults age 20 years and older are overweight or obese. In 1988-1994, by contrast, only 56 percent of adults age 20 and older were overweight or obese, and

WHEREAS, African-American women have the highest rates of being overweight or obese compared to other groups in the U.S. About four out of five African-American women are overweight or obese; and

WHEREAS, obesity is associated with increased risks of cancers of the esophagus, breast (post-menopausal), endometrium (the lining of the uterus), colon and rectum, kidney, pancreas, thyroid, gallbladder, and possibly other cancer types. Obese people are also at higher risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, and a number of other chronic diseases, and

WHEREAS, cancer is the second leading cause of death, heart disease is the leading cause of death, stroke and diabetes are the third and fourth leading causes of death. Death rates for all cancers are highest among black men and women, and

WHEREAS, there is strong evidence that physical activity is associated with reduced risk of cancers of the colon and breast and 50% of Americans do not engage in regular physical activity; and

WHEREAS, current National Cancer Institute-funded studies are exploring the role of physical activity in cancer survivorship and quality of life, cancer risk, and the needs of populations at increased risk; and

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. has established Physical and Mental Health as part of its Five Point Programmatic Thrust which promotes programs to increase physical activity, prevention of disease, and early detection of disease with regular physical exams and early cancer screenings,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will collectively and individually continue to participate in programs that promote weight loss with healthy foods and physical activity; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports state and federal legislation that promotes physical activity in the built environment such as policies to combat childhood obesity, changes in workplace and community design to promote walking and natural exercise as well as support continuing research in the role of physical activity and cancer risk, particularly in the African-American community.

- Perpetual resolution
- Allows to fight against legislation or policies that go against ending childhood obesity

*Submitted by the Southern Region Social Action Committee for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

### **30. SUPPORT FOR RURAL AND UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS**

WHEREAS, the United States Census Bureau classifies as “rural” all territory, population, and housing units located outside urbanized areas and urban clusters. Citizens living in rural areas often lack access to quality health and education services; and

WHEREAS, “underserved” communities are defined as vulnerable populations that include the economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic minorities, the uninsured, low-income children, the elderly, the homeless, those with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and those with other chronic health conditions, including severe mental illness; and

WHEREAS, underserved populations often encounter barriers to accessing quality education and healthcare services further enhanced by race, ethnicity, age, sex, and factors such as income, insurance coverage (or lack thereof), and absence of resources, facilities, and a viable workforce; and

WHEREAS, the intersection of social factors such as poor housing, environments, poverty, and inadequate education impacts quality of life. According to the United States Census Bureau, approximately 16% of the United States population lives below poverty level with 28% from the African-American community; and

WHEREAS, quality education and better health outcomes are aligned with the goals and objectives of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports the elimination of education and health disparities and will continue to form strategic partnerships with and support national initiatives and research, policy and legislative agendas of organizations and individuals who are committed to empowering African Americans living in rural and underserved communities.

- Unable to measure this except participation in coalition regarding rural.

*Submitted by the Clinton (MS) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*



### **31. A RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO THE ABDOMINAL SHACKLING OF PREGNANT INMATES**

WHEREAS, the American Civil Liberties Union and (ACLU), the National Women's Law Center and the Rebecca Project for Human Rights, report that five percent (5%) of women enter state prisons pregnant with six percent (6%) entering jails pregnant; and

WHEREAS, the medical community condemns the "barbaric practice" of shackling with several medical organizations such as the American Medical Association, the American College of Nurse-Midwives, and the American College of Obstetricians Gynecologists arguing that shackling during labor and delivery is detrimental to the well-being of the mothers and their babies; and

WHEREAS, although twenty-three (23) states and the District of Columbia in total have adopted policies outlining limitations on the use of restraints on incarcerated pregnant women, with the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 2008, prohibiting the shackling of pregnant mothers in all but the most extreme circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the current patchwork system of laws, regulations, written, and unwritten policies have created an atmosphere of confusion and noncompliance even in states with legislative bans on this unconstitutional practice, there is continued reporting of women being shackled during labor and delivery; and

WHEREAS, women of color are overrepresented in American prisons and jails, and the shackling of incarcerated women is more often than not the shackling of women of color with the attendant detriment to their newborn babies, an already marginalized population in the United States.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. advocate for the enactment of federal legislation prohibiting the practice of belly shackling once a pregnancy determination is made, as well as during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy, during labor and delivery, and for six weeks postpartum, including any time in transport to medical facilities or court; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. urge state and federal legislators to create federal and state oversight bodies to ensure that regulations, laws, and practices are followed and reports are timely received on the investigations of shackling incidents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. urge its chapters during its legislative days to encourage legislators to enact specific legislation as it relates to reproductive issues and healthcare for pregnant incarcerated women; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority, Inc. support the Anti-Shackling Coalition and work toward ending the practice of shackling incarcerated mothers during transport, labor, delivery, and post-delivery in state prisons and jails and all immigration facilities.

- Update: These state have in whole or in part have restricted the use of restraints: Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, DC, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia.
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists have talking points for State Legislation <https://www.acog.org/-/media/Departments/State-Legislative-Activities/TalkingPointsShackling.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20180922T1516303612>
- Dignity of Incarcerated Women Act sponsored by Cory Booker and Elizabeth Warren S. 1524 stuck in the Judiciary Committee
- We have not joined the Anti-Shackling Coalition

*Submitted by: Knightdale-Wake Forest Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **32. FAMILY LEAVE POLICY**

WHEREAS, according to the Pew Research Center, studies finds that Americans largely support paid leave, and most supporters say, employers, rather than the federal or state government, should cover the costs. When Australia passed its parental leave law in 2010, it left the U.S. as the only industrialized nation not to mandate paid leave for the mothers of newborns which put America on par with Lesotho, Swaziland, and Papua New Guinea—the only countries in the entire world that do not provide paid maternity leave; and

WHEREAS, according to the paper prepared by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR), the 1963 report of the President’s Commission on the Status of Women recommended that: “Paid maternity leave or comparable insurance benefits should be provided for women workers; employers, unions, and government should explore the best means of accomplishing this purpose.” Over 50 years later, access to paid family and medical leave of any kind, including maternity leave, is far from universal, and only a few states and no federal law provide a mechanism for mothers or fathers to take paid parental leave. One thing that has changed, however, is that due to shifting societal norms, attitudes, and policy knowledge if the 1963 report were to be written today, it would surely recommend that fathers, as well as mothers, receive access to paid parental leave; and

WHEREAS, according to PLOS Medicine (Public Library of Science), each additional month of paid maternity was associated with 7.9 fewer infant deaths per 1,000 live births, reflecting a 13% relative reduction. Reductions in infant mortality associated with increases in the duration of paid maternity leave were concentrated in the post-neonatal period; and

WHEREAS, according to the article published by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), most women and mothers are working or attached to the workforce while a few still choose to exit at

the time of birth, for the vast majority, not working is not a choice at the time of birth. For a vast majority of families depend on the incomes provided by both parents to meet their financial needs and to provide children the resources they need to grow. This is especially true of single mothers, who tend to have lower average incomes and few fall back options if they do not work. For working parents, paid leave and other workplace policies that recognize this reality are critical.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that paid parental leave not be viewed as a political or partisan issue. However, as one of common sense because an overwhelming majority of Americans support paid family leave; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., as proven social action agents, advocates for legislative changes on the local, state, and federal level to establish paid family leave policies as throughout these United States.

\* 2018 Update Currently California, Rhode Island, Washington, New Jersey, New York, and the District of Columbia have paid family leave

*Submitted by: Warner Robins Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

### **33. THE FIGHT AGAINST ALZHEIMER DISEASE, ESPECIALLY IN WOMEN**

WHEREAS, women are at a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's than men, out of the 5 million people living with Alzheimer's in the United States, 3.2 million are women and given this information and knowing that Alzheimer's is still one of the most misunderstood and underreported diseases, we must take action.

WHEREAS, 1 out of 6 women over the age of 60 will develop Alzheimer's, compared to 1 out of 11 men. Women in their 60s are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's than they are to develop breast cancer.

WHEREAS, the main reason that women are more likely to develop the neurological disease is simply that women live longer than men and that age is still the number one risk factor for developing Alzheimer's.

WHEREAS, Caregiving at home almost always affects work and other responsibilities, and A Woman's Nation Takes on Alzheimer's finds that working women feel they get less support for elder care than they do for child care. Almost half of women caregivers report they have tried to get time off from work for their caregiving duties, but couldn't get it.

WHEREAS, the economic impact of Alzheimer's disease—on government, families, and business—totals about \$300 billion per year in the United States. The cost of caring for a single person with Alzheimer's is a whopping \$56,800 a year, the bulk of it borne by each family. And all of these numbers are about to explode. With the baby boomers entering their mid-60s, an

Alzheimer's tsunami is about to hit, with the number of people with the disease expected to triple to 16 million by 2050.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated supports efforts in the fight against Alzheimer's disease by raising awareness specifically for the African-American community and targeting women.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated advocates for legislative support on the local, state and federal levels that continues and increases the funding for Alzheimer's research.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated supports the many efforts in the fight against Alzheimer's by raising awareness through public forms, participating in annual community walks, and raising funds to support research to help eradicate the disease.

*Submitted by: Atlanta Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

### **1. A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO HAITI'S WATER AND TOPSOIL CRISIS**

WHEREAS, Haiti's ecological crisis was exacerbated by a recent earthquake that limited access to clean water and the revitalization of the topsoil necessary for sustenance; and,

WHEREAS, Because of the earthquake, 3.8 million of Haiti's 9 million residents are without access to water, and 7.3 million have no access to sanitation; and

WHEREAS, Haiti now has the highest infant mortality rate in the western hemisphere, which The Pan-American Health Organization found attributable to water-borne gastro-intestinal diseases;

WHEREAS, the majority of Haitians live in poverty and are illiterate; and

WHEREAS, the majority of Haitians need to be educated about hygienic practices to maintain clean water; strategies to prevent life threatening diseases and the importance of protecting and planting trees; and

WHEREAS, the international community is posed to help rebuild Haiti; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that local chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will advocate for legislation and support organizations whose mission is to provide long term solutions to Haitian water, topsoil and deforestation crisis efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that local chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., develop a long-term plan to supply communities in Haiti with water filtration systems, sanitation devices, trees and topsoil and the education to develop and sustain these innovations through monetary donations to on-the ground organizations and in support of legislation that will change the conversation of how the world can best help Haiti recover; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that individual members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., lead the conversation in developing this long-term strategy and make small efforts locally to bring awareness to our respective communities of this issue and how we can help the Haitian community develop and maintain clean water and renew its topsoil.

*Submitted by the North Manhattan Alumnae Chapter For presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

## **2. A RESOLUTION ADDRESSING MALARIA IN AFRICA**

WHEREAS, nearly a million people still die each year from malaria; and

WHEREAS, Sub-Saharan Africa is hardest hit by malaria with nine in ten deaths a year, and the vast majority children under five-years-old; and

WHEREAS, among the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals is to improve child health and halt malaria by 2015; and

WHEREAS, most malaria-carrying mosquitoes bite at night and long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) provide a physical barrier as well as generate a chemical halo that extends beyond the mosquito net itself which can repel or deter mosquitoes from biting or shorten the mosquito's life span; and

WHEREAS, according to the UNICEF only 4% of children in Cameroon, Swaziland and Guinea sleep under LLINs; 62% of children in Zambia sleep under LLINs; and in Tanzania and Malawi more LLINs go to rich children; and

WHEREAS, the UN expects to provide 800 million people with LLINs, while facing a shortfall of funding for approximately 50 million nets; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations goal is to provide an LLIN to all 350 million people at risk of malaria by the end of 2010; and

WHEREAS, the best opportunity for increasing malaria prevention is with free or highly subsidized distribution of LLINs through existing health services; and

WHEREAS, among the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals is to form global partners to fulfill those goals; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will work with the appropriate organization and government agencies to address ways to combat malaria in Africa.

*Submitted by the North Manhattan Alumnae Chapter For presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

### **3. A RESOLUTION FOR THE PASSAGE OF THE U.S. SENATE BILL S819, CONGO CONFLICT MINERAL ACT OF 2009**

WHEREAS, the Congo, in west-central Africa, has been involved in power struggles over the rich mineral resources and land, which resulted in years of war and exploitation of women and girls; and

WHEREAS, since 1966, the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo has been the epicenter of the deadliest war since World War II, leading to the deaths of nearly six million people; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations estimates that 3,500 women and girls were raped in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) between January 2009 and August 2009. The victims' ages range from one year old to 90 years old, making this country the rape capital of the world; and

WHEREAS, the perpetrators of sexual violence have acted with impunity and have not been held accountable for their actions. Their violent sexual acts have increased the likelihood, among women and children, of being infected with the HIV/AIDS virus; and

WHEREAS, this conflict is fueled by the exploitation, control and unregulated trade of the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo's rich lucrative resources which include cassiterite (tin ore), columbite-tantalite or coltran (tantalum), wolframite (tungsten), and gold-minerals used in cell phones, PDAs and other electronic devices Americans use every day; and

WHEREAS, the international community has failed to sanction the looting of the Democratic Republic of Congo's spectacular wealth, and consequently, poverty in this nation is extremely high, with 80% of the population living on 30 cents or less per day; and

WHEREAS, the international community is slow in identifying, monitoring, and investigating major companies that purchase metals used to manufacture electronic devices; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. reaffirms its commitment to use its influence to make the Congo Crisis known to all Americans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will join forces with local and national organizations to continue to build partnerships that address the needs of abused women and children in our global communities, especially Africa; and



BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that chapters encourage their members to contact state and congressional legislators to inform them of our concerns regarding the inhuman treatment of women and children in the Democratic Republic of Congo and encourage them to pass the Congo Conflict Minerals Act of 2009.

*Submitted by the Glen Ellyn Area Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

#### **4. A RESOLUTION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE FEDERAL IMMIGRATION REFORM AND ENFORCEMENT IN A MANNER THAT DOES NOT FOSTER RACIAL PROFILING**

WHEREAS, on April 23, 2010, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed Senate Bill No. 1070 into law, which among other things, directs that "[f]or any lawful contact made by a law enforcement official or agency of this state or a county, city, town or other political subdivision of this state where reasonable suspicion exists that the person is an alien who is unlawfully present in the United States, a reasonable attempt shall be made, when practicable to determine the immigration status of the person" and allows "[a] law enforcement officer, without a warrant, may arrest a person if the officer has probable cause to believe that the person has committed any public offense that makes the person removable from the United States"; and

WHEREAS, the constitutionality and practical ramifications of the Arizona legislation has been criticized by many. United States President Barack Obama, a former constitutional law professor, called the law "misguided," promised a federal review of its constitutionality, and instructed his administration to closely monitor the civil rights implications of the law. Homeland Security Secretary and former Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano commented that the legislation "will likely hinder federal law enforcement from carrying out its priorities of detaining and removing dangerous criminal aliens," and openly supported "comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level because this issue cannot be solved by a patchwork of inconsistent state laws." Similarly, Arizona Association of Chiefs of Police, in their released statement in opposition, advocated that this issue is "most appropriately addressed at the federal level. " One of the first two lawsuits contesting the Arizona legislation was commenced by a fifteen-year veteran Arizona police officer, who explained that "skin color and/or physical features does not provide any race neutral criteria or basis to suspect or identify who is lawfully in the United States"; and

WHEREAS, representatives in Utah, Georgia, Colorado, Maryland, Ohio, North Carolina, Texas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Nebraska have endorsed the Arizona legislation and indicated their intent to present and pass similar legislation in their home states; and

WHEREAS, since its inception in 1913, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., a public-service organization that has grown to over 200,000 college-educated women in more 900 chapters worldwide, has remained committed to social equality and justice; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and its members, collectively and individually, make a concerted effort to advocate for comprehensive

federal immigration reform and enforcement in a manner that does not foster racial profiling. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated does not support any illegal act, including the illegal entry into the United States, but in an effort to reduce further injustice and to create a more egalitarian society, has denounced all acts of racial profiling; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the National Secretary of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated shall send copies of this resolution to United States President Barack Obama as well as United States Attorney General Eric Holder, and that each chapter, located within the United States, shall forward copies of this resolution to the Governor of their state as well as their local and federal representatives.

*Submitted by Phoenix Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

## **5. SUPPORT OF COMPREHENSIVE AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY IMMIGRATION REFORM**

WHEREAS, the United States of America has a long and rich heritage that has been shaped fundamentally and positively by immigrants; and

WHEREAS, there are 11 million undocumented immigrants contributing to the American economy and community that are being denied basic rights and protections; and

WHEREAS, sixty percent (60%) of undocumented immigrants crossed the Mexican or Canadian border without government approval and forty percent (40%) arrived by plane and have overstayed their visas; and

WHEREAS, a strong and vibrant democracy cannot function unless all men and women, regardless of their skin color or where they were born, can participate meaningfully in the political process with full rights and equal protections; and

WHEREAS, millions of workers (1 in 20 in the U.S. workforce) are undocumented workers who are vulnerable to employers who seek unfair advantage over their competitors by not paying workers minimum wage or by ignoring labor rights protected by law; and

WHEREAS, a recent study on domestic work in the United States found that approximately two-thirds of nannies, housekeepers and caregivers for the elderly are foreign born, and about half of them are undocumented; and

WHEREAS, temporary-worker programs do not reflect America's values as a democratic society because it creates a second class of workers, unable to exercise even the most fundamental rights, which lowers wages and working conditions for all workers; and

WHEREAS, the rate of deportations is at a record high with 34,000 individuals being deported monthly; heartbreakingly separating thousands of families; and



WHEREAS, family unity has always been a fundamental cornerstone of American society, yet current immigration laws undermine this value; and

WHEREAS, the dreams of young immigrants to have access to quality education and the hopes of millions of immigrants to reunify their families reflect core American values; and

WHEREAS, application costs for immigration status and eventual citizenship are unaffordable; costing an immigrant living in the U.S. \$1,070 to apply for a green card and another \$595 for a green card holder to apply for citizenship; and

WHEREAS, developing a rational legal immigration system is essential to ensuring America's future economic prosperity, and

WHEREAS, immigration reform would reduce the projected federal deficit by \$2.7 trillion without raising taxes and increase economic growth by \$1.5 trillion over the next decade; and

WHEREAS, the GDP would fall \$2.6 trillion over the decade should the United States take the advice of those who would deport all "illegal immigrants"; and

WHEREAS, the broken immigration system has spawned a thriving market for smugglers and has generated chaos on U.S. borders; and

WHEREAS, in the absence of comprehensive immigration reform, states have passed laws that deter undocumented immigrants from not only calling the police when they become the victims of crime, but also from coming forward as witnesses to crimes committed against others; and

WHEREAS, President Obama's 2012 Executive Order was introduced to stop the deportation of young immigrants, who contribute to the nation's common good.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., is committed to working together with legislators, government agencies and community partners (including civil rights, human rights and immigrant rights organizations) to pass immigration reform that will strengthen the nation; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., supports family reunification for loved ones to reunite with each other and by reducing unreasonable wait times that keep families separated; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. calls upon Congress to support comprehensive and non-discriminatory immigration reform with a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

*Submitted by: Springfield-Decatur Area Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **6. ELIMINATING THE “WET FOOT/DRY FOOT IMMIGRATION POLICY”**

WHEREAS, “WET FOOT, DRY FOOT” is the informal name given to a 1995 agreement under which Cuban migrants seeking passage to the United States who are intercepted at sea (“wet feet”) are sent back to Cuba or to a third country, while those who make it to U.S. soil (“dry feet”) are allowed to remain in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Haitian immigrants, just like Cuban immigrants, desire to have the opportunity to live the American dream. They dream of escaping the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere; they dream of living in a free democratic society; they desire to be good citizens contributing to the continued growth and development of the United States; they desire safe neighborhoods and adequate housing for their families; they desire to provide their children with educational opportunities for a brighter future; and they dream of simple things often taken for granted like running water, electricity and healthy foods to eat. However, some dreams are awakened by a harsh reality. For Haitian immigrants that reality comes in the form of Coast Guard boats used to repatriate them back to Haiti supported by the flawed, and clearly unjust ‘Wet Foot/Dry Foot’ policy of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the United States, a nation of immigrants, has a well-documented history of disparate treatment of Haitian refugees under the immigration process - case in point, the immigration practices applied to Cuban and Haitian refugees. Cubans who reach American shores are always welcomed into the United States, while Haitian immigrants are summarily repatriated to Haiti without due process or the same respect and dignity afforded to Cuban immigrants; and

WHEREAS, since Haitians began arriving on the shores of Florida in the early 1970s, the United States has continuously found ways to repatriate them. To date, the Haitian people continue to endure the contradictions of American immigration policy; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the United States policy, the Catholic Church in Miami is working on a proposal that would allow thousands of orphaned Haitian children displaced by the 2010 earthquake to permanently live in the United States. A similar effort launched in 1960, known as Operation Pedro Pan, brought about 14,000 unaccompanied children from Cuba to the U.S. Under the plan dubbed “Pierre Pan,” Haitian orphans would be placed in group homes and then paired with foster parents. Having children who are homeless and possibly without parents, this is the moral and humane thing to do; and

WHEREAS, the treatment of the Haitian refugees is unfair, especially when compared to the United States treatment of Cuban refugees. Cubans have benefited from the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966, which made qualifying for asylum easier because they are fleeing the communist government. Haitians have traditionally found it very difficult to qualify as refugees and apply formally for asylum. The anomaly has provoked charges of racism from Democratic members of the United States Congress.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., support comprehensive immigration reform that will focus on keeping families together and providing a fair and equitable pathway to citizenship for all immigrants desiring to live in the United States of America, and not a policy based on partisan politics; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., support and advocate for the passage of legislation to eliminate the blatant disparities between Cubans refugees and Haitians refugees as it pertains to “WET FOOT, DRY FOOT” immigration policy.

*Submitted by: South Broward Alumnae (FL) for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **7. URGING THE UNITED STATES TO RATIFY CEDAW**

WHEREAS, the United States is a United Nations (UN) member nation and is among seven countries that have not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which provides a framework for ending violence against women, ensuring girls' access to education, promoting women's economic opportunity, and guaranteeing women's political participation. The other nations that have not ratified are the, Iran, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and the Pacific island nations of Tonga and Palau; and

WHEREAS, CEDAW, or the Treaty for the Rights of Women, was adopted by the United Nations in 1979. It provides an international standard and agreement, and is the only international instrument that comprehensively addresses women's political, civil, cultural, economic and social rights; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted in July 2002 to recommend ratification of CEDAW, but the treaty has never come before the full Senate for a vote. Passage requires the support of 2/3 of the U. S. Senate, or 67 votes; and

WHEREAS, the lack of U.S. ratification serves as a disincentive for governments to uphold CEDAW's mandate and their obligations under it to end discrimination against women. With U.S. ratification, the Women's Convention would become a much stronger instrument in support of women's struggles to achieve full protection and realization of women's rights; and

WHEREAS, there are many examples of the continuing socio-economic gender gap in the United States and beyond: According to the 2014 Global Gender Report, the U.S. is ranked 20 out of 142 countries for gender equity. American women earn 78 cents for every dollar a man makes. Nothing in the U.S. Constitution guarantees women the same rights as a man or in any legal documents or piece of legislation Only 17% of the seats in the United States Congress are held by women. The United Nations is 70 years old and there has never been a female Secretary General; and

WHEREAS, the CEDAW is a tool that women around the world are using effectively to bring about change in their conditions and has proved to be invaluable in opposing the effects of

discrimination, to include violence, poverty, political participation, domestic violence, lack of legal protections, denial of inheritance, property rights, access to credit and human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, the principles espoused in CEDAW are consistent with those in the US law and with our country's foreign and domestic policy objectives; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. restates its support for the United States' ratification of CEDAW.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will leverage its status as a United Nations-recognized non-governmental organization to convene conversations with American leaders and the international community about the importance of CEDAW and other legislation designed to help women thrive.

*Submitted by the South Broward Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **8. BRING BACK OUR GIRLS—NEVER FORGET**

WHEREAS, nearly 280 female students were kidnapped from the Government Secondary School in Chibok, Nigeria on April 14, 2014. Fifty-three girls escaped, while approximately 223 girls remain in captivity. A few weeks later, eight girls between the ages of 8 and 15 were also kidnapped; and

WHEREAS, Boko Haram, an Islamic Jihadist terrorist group claimed responsibility of kidnapping the girls. Since their rise to power in 2009, Boko Haram has been described as “one of the worst regional terrorist organizations” and has left thousands of people dead. According to their leader Abubakar Shekau, the girls in captivity have been converted to Islam and have been married off and likely are being used as slaves; and

WHEREAS, Boko Haram does not believe in women being educated. The term “Boko Haram” translates to “western education is sinful”; and

WHEREAS, more than one year has passed since the abduction of these girls and the likelihood of their return to their families seems to diminish daily. Their plight is largely ignored by major media outlets in the United States; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. calls upon the President of the United States, United States Senators and Representatives and the Secretary of State to put pressure on the Nigerian government to ensure the return of the girls to their homes as well as, provide proper health care and counseling upon their return; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will utilize its status as a United Nations-recognized non-governmental organization to help lead the global fight to protect who seek to be educated; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will continue its quest to stress the importance of educating women across the globe. An educated woman can empower herself, her family, her community, her country and the world.

*Submitted by the Nassau (NY) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **9. SOUTH SUDAN FAMINE RELIEF**

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is a public service organization committed to International Awareness and Involvement, Political Awareness and Involvement, addressing injustices wherever they may exist and strives to make a difference in the lives of those that are socially disadvantaged; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations (U.N.) formally declared a famine in parts of South Sudan. While many people around the world find it difficult to access food and nutrients, conditions rarely meet the official criteria for a famine. According to the United Nations, "A famine can be declared only when certain measures of mortality, malnutrition, and hunger are met. At least 20 percent of households in an area face extreme food shortages with a limited ability to cope; acute malnutrition rates exceed 30 percent, and the death rate exceeds two persons per day per 10,000 persons." In parts of South Sudan, intense fighting and displacement have made it difficult to harvest crops. An estimated five million people (about 50% of the South Sudanese population) have been affected by food shortages, which are expected to spread by the middle of the year; and

WHEREAS, Entire generations are at risk of lasting damage stemming from the vicious cycle of greed, hate, hunger and violence that produces these famines; children are always the most affected, even those who survive may be mentally and physically stunted for life; and

WHEREAS, February 2017, the United Nations declared a famine in South Sudan's Mayendit and Leer counties. It was the world's first famine declaration since 2011, in Somalia. Due to massive shortages, the U.N. Security Council describes the food crisis in South Sudan as the worst in the world. Despite a peace accord signed in August 2015, South Sudan remains on the verge of economic collapse and continues to struggle with widespread food insecurity.

WHEREAS, since 2013, armies and allied militias have swept through this area time and again, razing and burning entire villages, slaughtering and raping as they go. Thousands of people have drowned in the state's rivers and swamps as they fled. Relentless war has rendered just about all aspects of daily life unsafe; and

WHEREAS, Getting aid to those most in need might be difficult because of both the rebels and Sudanese governments actions of bribery, prohibition of UN flight drops, and aid worker murders; and

WHEREAS, there is also a severe shortage of health care services and professionals (one doctor for every 100,000 people). Medical facilities are under-equipped and unhygienic. Since many South Sudanese do not have access to clean water, deadly diseases such as malaria continue to spread; and

WHEREAS, Women and girls, in particular, are most vulnerable due to the crisis, as many are facing violence, abuse and exploitation daily. Thousands lack the care they need to cope with unwanted pregnancies and pregnancy complications; and

WHEREAS, during this time of unprecedented need, the world's largest supplier of humanitarian relief, the United States, under the direction of President Donald Trump is preparing to eliminate much of the funding toward humanitarian aid in the proposed budget; and

WHEREAS, Humanitarian aid makes up a small fraction of the U.S. government spending — [less than 1 percent](#). Although the cuts would have to withstand bipartisan opposition, the State Department and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) could see their budgets reduced by [more than a third](#). U.S. funding to the United Nations might drop by [more than half](#); and

WHEREAS, the United Nations were unsuccessful in their efforts to raise \$4.4 billion by the end of March 2017 for emergency hunger relief operations, a number of worldwide agencies working are providing relief in the area; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Grand Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. calls on the power of its membership to take immediate action to support relief efforts, which will address the many needs of the people of South Sudan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. shall identify an organization to partner with, with a proven track record of getting the most relief to areas most in need; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. communicate with the office of the President of the United States, and implore restoration of funding for those in need inside and outside of the United States; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that we begin these efforts immediately so that people who are suffering may benefit as soon as possible.

*Submitted by Baltimore Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*

# **PUBLIC SERVICE**

## **1. EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND DISASTER RECOVERY**

WHEREAS, the cost of being unprepared in the event of a disaster is staggering; and

WHEREAS, failing to prepare for extreme weather events have cost the United States \$1.15 trillion in economic losses from 1980 to 2010. Between 1990 and 2014, the United States experienced 38 earthquakes, 568 storms, and 166 floods. In 2012, the United States was struck by 936 tornadoes, causing 1.6 billion in damages; and in 2013, there were more than 400 weather-related fatalities and nearly 2,800 injuries and deadly weather caused more than \$8 billion in property damage; and

WHEREAS, research shows that people are more prepared for disaster if they are aware of community alerts and warning systems; talk about their preparedness; plan with family and others; attend trainings and meetings, and participate in a drill or exercise; and

WHEREAS, the 2012 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Survey shows that only 39% of people surveyed have a plan that they have discussed with their family members and almost 50% do not have supplies set aside in their home for use in a disaster; and

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority has developed a National Emergency Response Team Taskforce and appointed regional, state, and local ERT contacts within its membership; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports efforts to increase awareness about emergency preparedness activities; provide structured and systematic training for the membership's Readiness, Response, and Recovery efforts; provide steps for early response and efficient recovery; provide resource support and guidance for sorority members and the communities impacted by natural or man-made disasters; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that all chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc will continue to support emergency response and disaster recovery efforts for its members and the community at large by following the "America's Prepare-A-Thon" agenda to maintain awareness of emergency response initiatives throughout the sorority year.

*Submitted by the Joliet Area/South Suburban Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*



## **MISCELLANEOUS/COMMEMORATIVE**

### **1. RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE FAIR TREATMENT OF FEMALE SOLDIERS AND A CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF ARMY PRIVATE FIRST CLASS LAVENA JOHNSON—2008 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, there have been greatly increased numbers of non-combat related deaths among female members of the United States military service, many suspected to be the result of rape and retaliation by fellow soldiers; and the military has failed to properly investigate those deaths or the causes of those deaths have been purposely misrepresented by the military; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense records reflecting 2,947 rapes reported in 2006 and 2,688 rapes reported in 2007 suggest that women are more likely to be assaulted by a fellow soldier than killed by enemy fire in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, the suspicious death of 19-year-old Private First Class LaVena Johnson in Balad, Iraq on July 19, 2005 is cited as a likely example, where her death has been classified by the military as a suicide and the urging by family members and petitions of thousands for further investigation and substantive answers have been generally ignored, despite inconsistencies in the investigation including:

1. Lab test conclusions, based upon gun residue tests, that she may not have handled the weapon,
2. The failure to find the fatal bullet where she died,
3. A trail of blood leading from her tent to the outside,
4. Evidence that someone appears to have attempted to set her body on fire,
5. The unlikelihood that, at 5'1" tall, she could have used a 40" M-16 to kill herself while seated as indicated in the military report,
6. A bullet to the left side of her head though she was right-handed,
7. Unexplained trauma to her body, including a dislocated shoulder, a broken nose, 2 loose teeth and a lip so badly battered that a mortician had to reconstruct it,
8. The failure to find her bank debit card though she had used it two hours earlier to purchase candy,
9. No apparent indication of suicide in military documents showing her co-commander having written that she was clearly happy and healthy physically and emotionally; and

WHEREAS, only a small percentage of reported rapes are investigated by the military, with an even smaller percentage resulting in any kind of punishment, and charges brought in such matters are frequently dismissed in military trials or aggressors are given only a "slap on the wrist;" further, a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office was established by the Department of Defense in 2005 to provide education and courses to improve the reporting of such assaults, but nothing has been done to eliminate the problem, and



WHEREAS, the military was pressured to conduct a congressional investigation into the suspicious non-combat death of well-known athlete Cpl. Pat Tillman, and the military should not do less in a case where the death involved a soldier who was not nationally well-known but who was, nonetheless, serving her country honorably; and

WHEREAS, without adequate sexual harassment training, impartial and serious investigations, appropriate punishments, and complete intolerance for cover-ups, this critical problem will continue to escalate at alarming rates.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will advocate for a Congressional Investigation into the suspicious death of Army Private First Class LaVena Johnson, and for strong investigations into all sexual assault complaints by writing to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and members of the Armed Services Committee urging that punitive action against aggressors be effectuated, thereby providing fair and just treatment for our female soldiers who so ably and courageously serve our nation.

*Submitted by Saint Louis Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2008 National Convention.*

## **2. A RESOLUTION ON THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE KATRINA—2008 APPROVED**

WHEREAS, Hurricane Katrina occurred on August 29, 2005 and is duly noted as the costliest and one of the five deadliest hurricanes in the history of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent breaking of the levees, resulted in over 1,800 deaths and the displacement of over one million residents of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama; and

WHEREAS, over 275,000 homes were destroyed in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama following Hurricane Katrina; and

WHEREAS, nearly three years later approximately 40,000 Gulf Coast families continue to live in mobile homes leaving them incredibly susceptible to another catastrophe as the next hurricane season approaches; and

WHEREAS, many of these families owned the homes that they lived in but are unable to prove ownership secondary to the destruction of the deeds and records detailing said ownership; and

WHEREAS, other homes and estates were inherited down from generation to generation, often without formal recording of transfer; and

WHEREAS, many of these homes have been adversely possessed, sold and occupied without legal transfer of title or deed; and

WHEREAS, the New Orleans City Council voted unanimously to allow the demolition by the federal government of 4, 500 public housing apartments that provided housing to 3,000, mostly African-American families who lived in the aforementioned apartments before Hurricane Katrina;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. will encourage its membership and other public service organizations to partner to keep Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath in the forefront of the national conscience; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Inc. will continue to strongly encourage its membership to persistently bring this issue to the attention of their lawmakers.

*Submitted by the New York Alumnae Chapter for consideration at the 2008 Convention.*

### **3. A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DR. DOROTHY IRENE HEIGHT**

WHEREAS, Dr. Dorothy Irene Height was born on March 24, 1912 in Richmond, Virginia to James Edward Height and Fannie Burroughs Height; and

WHEREAS, at the age of four, her family moved to Rankin, Pennsylvania where she was brought up in the public-school system; and

WHEREAS, after being turned away from Barnard College because the school had already reached its quota of two African-American students for the year, Dr. Height was admitted into New York University where she earned a bachelor degree in education and a master's degree in psychology in four years; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Height went on to complete postgraduate work at Columbia University and the New York School of Social Work; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Height was initiated into Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. in 1939 through Rho Chapter in New York, New York; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Height served as the 10th National President of Delta Sigma Theta from 1947-1956; and

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta achieved many firsts during Dr. Height's administration as National President including the purchase of the first National Headquarters, the hiring of the first executive director, the implementation of the Sorority's Five Point Programmatic Thrust; the chartering of the first international chapter (Port-au-Prince Alumnae Chapter (Haiti); and

WHEREAS, in 1957, Dr. Height assumed the office of national president of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), a position she held for four decades where she rallied to promote the advancement and empowerment of African-American women and families; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Height's exemplary life was characterized by her untiring commitment to improving the conditions of humankind; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Height was a strategist in the struggle for the equality of all people for more than half a century and she was a driving force behind the development of policies affecting women, families, children, social welfare, economic development and civil and human rights; and

WHEREAS, upon her death on April 20, 2010, President of the United States, Barack Obama eulogized Dr. Height as "the godmother of the Civil Rights Movement and a hero to so many Americans;" and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. celebrates the life and legacy of Dr. Dorothy Irene Height, civil rights matriarch and 10th National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

*Submitted by the National Social Action Commission and North Manhattan Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

#### **4. A RESOLUTION FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN SERVICE WOMEN AND DISPARITIES**

WHEREAS, The Veteran Affairs Office of the Actuary in 2004 listed African-American women as 19% of the veteran population and the projected percentage for 2010 as 25%; and

WHEREAS, current statistics tell us that 30.3% of the military is African-American women with approximately 33.6% serving as enlisted, and 13.1% serving as commissioned and warrant officers; and,

WHEREAS, the national sorority demographics says that a number of Sorors have served with honor and there are many who are presently serving with distinguishing; and

WHEREAS, such duty demands great personal sacrifice, even in some cases supreme forfeiture of limb and life to protect our homes and liberties; and

WHEREAS, there is documented evidence that gender disparities exist in promotions, assignments, legal liabilities, health services and handling of sexual harassment cases resulting in economic impacts on female economics, especially when they are head of household; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. through its local chapters support Disabled American Veterans programs, local USO's Adopt-A-Soldier, care packages for military personnel and other projects which target support for women and their families serving on active duty; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority serve as a legislative advocate for those bills which safeguard benefits for servicewomen, especially in the area of health, education, homeownership and retirement benefits.

*Submitted by Chester (SC) Alumnae Chapter For presentation at the 2010 National Convention.*

## **5. SUPPORTING WOMEN VETERAN'S INITIATIVES**

WHEREAS, Women veterans who have served our country with distinction and sacrifice in protecting our country, are now the fastest growing group within the veteran community, and in 2011, about 1.8 million or 8 percent of the 22.2 million veterans were women; and

WHEREAS, Women veterans have encountered many challenges and obstacles while readjusting to civilian life, including increased homelessness and unemployment (nine percent higher than civilian counterparts), and

WHEREAS, Women veterans may have suffered greatly from challenges when they return home to civilian life, including mental and physical abuse, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST); and

WHEREAS, Women veterans need support and resources to ensure successful re-entry and attainment of their educational goals and employment goals;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will support and advocate for legislation, programs and initiatives to assist women veterans in readjusting to civilian life.

*Submitted by: North Manhattan (NY) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **6. PROMOTING HEALTHY BLACK MALE/FEMALE RELATIONSHIPS**

WHEREAS, marriage rates among blacks has declined from 61% in 1961 to nearly half that rate to 32% in 2008; according to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies the marriage rate is lowest amongst black women when compared to Caucasian and Latino women; and

WHEREAS, the Pew Research Center reports that in 2008 72% of black women giving birth were unmarried and black children (52%) are nearly three times as likely as white children (18%) and nearly twice as likely as Hispanic children (27%) to live with one parent; and,

WHEREAS, the National Institutes of Health reported that never married black women exhibited significantly higher levels of depression compared to women who were married or living together with an intimate partner; and,

WHEREAS, the National Urban League's "State of Black America 2008 Report- Shouldering the Third Burden: The Status of African-American Women" identifies structural factors such as

educational and economic earnings gap between black women and black men, the high incarceration and the increased recidivism rates among black men as contributing to low marriage rates. The high percentage rate of unmarried black women has led many to carry the economic burden of being the sole breadwinner, and the lack of support from a partner has had a devastating impact on the health and wellness of both black women and their children; and,

WHEREAS, the American Psychological Association has reported on studies going beyond demographics, which suggest that regardless of age or education, married African Americans report higher levels of global happiness than do non-married African Americans. In addition, rates of psychological disorder among married African Americans are lower than rates among their divorced, separated, and widowed counterparts.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., support and endorse Black Marriage Day, which is celebrated annually on the fourth Sunday in March. Black Marriage Day is a national initiative to change the way marriage is viewed within the black community, as well as, provide training and resources to aid singles and married couples in improving and sustaining healthy relationships.

*Submitted by: Pomona Valley (CA) Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2013 National Convention.*

## **7. COMMENDATION FOR PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA**

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama is the first African-American President of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama was elected as president for two consecutive terms; and

WHEREAS, during his first term in office, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act were passed in 2009, and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act was passed 2010; and

WHEREAS, in the area of education, Pell Grants were expanded for low-income students, the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top competitive grant program was created to encourage and reward states for educational reforms, and policies were implemented to eradicate the predatory practices of for-profit colleges and universities by eliminating commercially focused schools from receiving federal student aid funding; and

WHEREAS, the President kept his campaign promise and ended the War in Iraq; continued the fight against terrorism by eliminating Osama bin Laden; defended Libyan civilians against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi; improved America's image abroad by reversing the decline in world opinion of the U.S. and helped secure more than \$500 billion dollars for the International Monetary Fund to provide lines of credit and other support to emerging market countries; and

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama advocated for and signed into law, the Affordable Healthcare Act, which provided access to quality affordable health care for millions of Americans, improved school nutrition through the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act in conjunction with First Lady Michelle Obama, and expanded health care for children with the 2009 Children's Health Insurance Authorization Act which allows health care coverage for 4 million more children; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. commends President Barack Obama on his historic elections to two consecutive terms as President of the United States of America; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., further commends President Barack Obama for his efforts to improve the socioeconomic conditions of all American citizens both here and abroad, and the positive impact those efforts had on the African-American communities.

*Submitted by the Springfield-Decatur (IL) Area Alumnae Chapter for presentation at 2015 National Convention.*

## **8. HONORING U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL LORETTA ELIZABETH LYNCH**

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. has a long history of public service and social action and the Honorable U.S. Attorney General Loretta Elizabeth Lynch, who co-chartered a Delta Sigma Theta chapter at Harvard University, has displayed a commitment to public service throughout her 30-year career has a key member of the American Judicial system; and,

WHEREAS, Ms. Lynch, who is the first African-American female Attorney General of the United States, has consistently used her positions in the Justice Department to attack injustice from religious and racial hate crimes, to sex trafficking and police brutality, terrorism and organized crime; and

WHEREAS, the seeds of the Attorney General's commitment to justice and fair play were sown by her father, a fourth-generation Baptist minister who opened the basement of his Greensboro, NC church to college students and NAACP members organizing sit-ins in the 1960s, her mother, who as a young minister's wife, refused to use segregated bathrooms while traveling through rural North Carolina, and from her grandfather who, as a sharecropper-minister with eight children, hid African-Americans facing Jim Crow justice beneath the floorboards of his home; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Loretta E. Lynch's long-stalled nomination finally came to an end after 166 days, on April 23, 2015, when she was confirmed by the U.S. Senate by a vote of 56 to 43 with 10 Republicans – including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell – supporting her nomination; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. congratulates the Honorable Loretta Lynch on this historic appointment and expresses its gratitude and appreciation to the individuals and organizations that worked tirelessly to secure this confirmation, particularly the members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. who diligently used their collective voices to as they urge the U.S. Senate to vote for her confirmation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Dr. Paulette C. Walker, 25th National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., in a nationally televised interview, recognized the graciousness and fortitude that Attorney General Lynch displayed throughout the confirmation process; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. are confident that Ms. Lynch, with her well-established legal reputation and demonstrated commitment to civil rights protections, will be a strong and circumspect leader of the U.S. Department of Justice.

*Submitted by the Northern Virginia Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2015 National Convention.*

## **9. RESTITUTION FOR THE HENRIETTA LACKS FAMILY**

WHEREAS, according to the documented accounts of journalist and author Rebecca Skloot in the Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, the story of cancer patient Henrietta Lacks of Baltimore, MD who died of cervical cancer in 1951 at Johns Hopkins Hospital and;

WHEREAS, these accounts indicate that doctors at Johns Hopkins Hospital removed and cultivated cells from the cervical tissue of Mrs. Lacks without her consent or the knowledge of the Lacks Family; and

WHEREAS, the several decades of study and research of those cells, dubbed HeLa cells, ultimately resulted in major medical advances worldwide, including but not limited to: polio, Parkinson's Disease, leukemia, hemophilia, influenza, cancer, HIV, and aging; and

WHEREAS, according to Author Skloot's research of the Henrietta Lacks case, it is illegal to sell human organs and tissue for research, but legal to charge fees for collecting and processing of human tissue and cells, thereby commercializing their use; and

WHEREAS, The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks revealed that Johns Hopkins Hospital made cells available across the globe upon request and continuously benefitted monetarily and;

WHEREAS, it is fair, just, and humane, that the Lacks Family be granted monetary compensation or restitution in view of monetary benefits attained by Johns Hopkins Hospital;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. advocate for restitution of the Lacks Family and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. join with policy analysts, scientists, philosophers, and ethicists who have suggested that a system in which donors of human specimen e.g. tissues and cells are entitled to increase levels of compensation; particularly as the specimen yield continuous benefit to science and to medicine and;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. monitor advocacy efforts and legislation that could result from those efforts on behalf of donors and their families in being compensated.

*Submitted by: North Arundel County Alumnae Chapter for presentation at the 2017 National Convention.*