

April 29, 2026

The Honorable Burgess Owens
Subcommittee Chairman
Committee on Education & Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
309 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Alma Adams
Subcommittee Ranking Member
Committee on Education & Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2436 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Owens and Ranking Member Adams:

On behalf of the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), we write today to share our views on the Freedom of Association in Higher Education Act of 2025 (H.R. 2555) and urge you to support this important piece of legislation.

Made up of 26 women's-only inter/national sororities, NPC is the world's largest advocacy organization specifically charged with advancing the sorority experience. Our member organizations have a current combined undergraduate membership of more than 390,000 women on nearly 700 campuses. As values-based organizations, NPC sororities live their missions by developing strong community leaders and providing millions of dollars in philanthropic support and millions of hours in community service to dozens of worthy causes.

We know that sorority membership is aligned with positive outcomes, including increased persistence to graduation (*Gallup 2014, 2021*) and interest in our organizations is increasing year over year. Unfortunately, members, and potential members, of NPC sororities are increasingly being deprived of their First Amendment guarantees, including the right to freely associate with organizations of their choosing. Courts have long recognized a First Amendment right to associate with a wide variety of organizations, including sororities. Indeed, the United States Supreme Court has stated, "The Constitution guarantees freedom of association of this kind as an indispensable means of preserving other individual liberties" (*Roberts v. U.S. Jaycees*, 468 U.S. 609, 618 (1984)).

Across the country, more and more university administrations have chosen to flagrantly violate these sacred rights in order to target our organizations, and sanction individual members or potential members, who simply want to find a home on their campuses with like-minded women. NPC, and our member organizations, prioritize partnering with institutions to provide transformational experiences to collegiate women but we must also, on an increasing basis, engage in advocacy on this topic to convince university administrators that



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PROUDLY REPRESENTING
26 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

ALPHA CHI OMEGA
ALPHA DELTA PI
ALPHA EPSILON PHI
ALPHA GAMMA DELTA
ALPHA OMICRON PI
ALPHA PHI
ALPHA SIGMA ALPHA
ALPHA SIGMA TAU
ALPHA XI DELTA
CHI OMEGA
DELTA DELTA DELTA
DELTA GAMMA
DELTA PHI EPSILON
DELTA ZETA
GAMMA PHI BETA
KAPPA ALPHA THETA
KAPPA DELTA
KAPPA KAPPA GAMMA
PHI MU
PHI SIGMA SIGMA
PI BETA PHI
SIGMA DELTA TAU
SIGMA KAPPA
SIGMA SIGMA SIGMA
THETA PHI ALPHA
ZETA TAU ALPHA



students don't lose their First Amendment rights when they walk through the campus gates. Notable examples of the deprivation of First Amendment rights include:

- **University of Michigan:** In 2018, the University of Michigan—a public university and arm of the State of Michigan—announced that students interested in joining a women's sorority must meet a 12 credit minimum requirement before being eligible to join. This requirement was not enforced against students who wanted to join the football team nor the chess club. It was only enforced against Greek-letter organizations. After five years and dozens of discussions with students, alumni and organizations, the university began to roll back the policy but students interested in joining must still wait five weeks before sororities can issue a bid to membership, yet those same women do not have to wait to join the marching band nor drama club.
- **Duke University:** In the fall of 2020, similar to the situation at Michigan, administrators announced that first year students would no longer be eligible to be recruited or participate in Greek life activities supported by the institution. This was a unilateral decision with no opportunity for current or prospective members to share their opinions about the process. This is a policy that does not apply to students wanting to join any other student organization or athletic team. Students and alumni repeatedly made efforts to engage in discussion with administrators to roll back the policy, but the requests fell on deaf ears. After more than a year of attempted partnership, the eight NPC sorority chapters once affiliated with the university chose to sever the relationship and operate independent of university support. In the five years since separating from the university, the sorority community has grown by 175%.
- **SUNY Plattsburgh:** For several years, the administration at SUNY Plattsburgh allowed a policy to exist that limited the rights of adult students' ability to choose to join one of our organizations by requiring that anyone under the age of 21 have permission from a parent or legal guardian approving of the student's decision to join a Greek-letter organization. This was not a requirement for non-Greek-letter organizations. In New York, like most other states, the age of majority is 18, and this public university was outrageously restricting the personal liberty of adult students to associate with other like-minded students. Only after engaging with the university's General Counsel were we able to have this requirement removed.

In each of these cases, NPC, a relatively small 501(c)7 non-profit organization, must engage legal counsel to defend the basic Constitutional rights of our members. And the deprivation of rights is not limited to restrictions on joining, they extend to attempting to restrict expression/speech and prevent individuals from socializing with others simply due to the Greek letters worn across one's chest.

- **University of Nevada, Reno**, in 2018, and **University of Nevada, Las Vegas**, in 2025, attempted to limit association rights of members of our chapters (recognized student organizations) with members of other student organizations not recognized by the university. In both situations, the schools instituted **sweeping and unlawful prohibition on mere association**, warning against the following conduct: Allowing members of unrecognized groups to attend the “socials, philanthropy events [of recognized groups] and attending the parties and tailgates hosted by” unrecognized groups (2025 Courtesy Notice from UNLV Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities). The universities' attempt to regulate lawful, social and philanthropic interactions between students in recognized and unrecognized groups was impermissibly **overbroad** and lacked any legally justifiable basis.

In September 2018, *The Nevada Sagebrush*, the UN-Reno student newspaper, printed the thoughts of a then-collegiate sorority woman who felt the actions of the school were becoming oppressive, “We take pride in wearing Greek letters and want to wear our favorite shirts to represent them. However, we will get in trouble ... They [the school] want to dictate what we wear, who we are friends with, etc.” Again, NPC engaged legal counsel to navigate these



waters with the university's legal department and the school refused to recognize both state and federal association rights. The sorority community chose to operate independently until new administrators joined the school's leadership and lifted the restrictive policies.

- **University of Maryland:** In the spring of 2024, the university took unprecedented action focused directly at Greek-letter organizations by enacting unlawful prior restraints on speech, imposing a no-contact order and ignoring fair process for members of 16 NPC chapters when attempting to address the bad acts of a few fraternity men. Given the lack of proof of any misconduct from university administrators, one of chapters, along with several "Jane Doe" members, had no choice but to take legal action. As a result of this lawsuit, and another, two weeks after activities were originally suspended, the university eventually reinstated all sororities with no finding of wrongdoing. While addressing and investigating misconduct allegations is crucial, it is equally important for universities to consider how such actions are taken and the repercussions they may have on innocent individuals and their legally protected rights.

This list illustrates only a few examples of recent unlawful action taken by universities—both public and private—to restrict the free expression and association rights of collegiate women across the country. The actions taken by these institutions cast a shadow on themselves but also on sorority life across the country as they imply guilt worthy of sanction on thousands of young women dedicated to bettering themselves and their communities.

Collegiate women should not be expected to relinquish their First Amendment rights just because they want to join a sorority or are already members. University administrators should not continue to be allowed to unlawfully take aim at our organizations nor our members. It is crucial that Congress act to preserve the rights of the almost 400,000 collegiate sorority members in all 50 states across our nation by passing H.R. 2555.

We would be happy to engage in additional discussion about the situations described above or those we are currently addressing on other campuses.

With many thanks,

Dani Weatherford, JD
Chief Executive Officer
National Panhellenic Conference

Kelly Beck
Chair, Board of Directors
National Panhellenic Conference