

# 2022 DDNC LEAVE BEHIND

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated was founded in 1913 on the campus of Howard University to promote academic excellence; to provide support to the underserved; to educate and stimulate participation in the establishment of positive public policy.

Today, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated has chartered 1,058 chapters worldwide and has initiated more than 350,000 members since its founding. We have also awarded more than \$5,600,000 in scholarships and grants. The Sorority boldly confronts the challenges that face all Americans, including those of African descent, through its Five-Point Programmatic Thrust of economic development, educational development, international awareness and involvement, physical and mental health, and political awareness and involvement.

### **FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

#### **Voting Rights, Voting Access and Voter Engagement**

As a citizen in the United States, you have the right to vote and have your voice heard in every election. Casting your vote is fundamental to America's democracy. It's the most basic - and essential - building block of our government. In 2013, the Supreme Court gutted key portions of the Voting Rights Act, which protected eligible voters from discriminatory voting laws. The court claimed those protections were no longer necessary.

Today, voter suppression legislation, tactics and schemes are being implemented across the country. Congress has a duty to make sure that every eligible voter can engage in the electoral process, access voting and cast their vote without any barriers.

*We urge Congress to pass legislation that protects the right to vote and restores Sections II, IV and V of the Voting Rights Act..*

#### **Student Loan Debt Crisis**

Student loan debt has reached astronomical levels in the U.S., with millions of Americans carrying an estimated \$1.54 trillion in education debt. The financial burden of student loan debt falls heaviest on women and people of color. According to an analysis by the American Association of University Women (AAUW), women hold nearly two-thirds of the nation's \$1.54 trillion in student loan debt. Even before COVID-19 upended the global economy, the gender wage gap made it harder for women to repay their student loans. AAUW's 2020 analysis also revealed that:

- Black Women finish their undergraduate education with more debt than other women.
- First-generation college students face more debt by the time they graduate.
- Women who attended for-profit colleges owe far more money than those who attended public or private non-profits schools.
- Recent graduates are facing the worst unemployment crisis since the Great Depression and women are faring worse than men. In the early weeks of the pandemic, women filed nearly 59% of unemployment claims, despite being only half of the labor force.

We urge President Biden to sign an executive order canceling student debt.

### **Redistricting**

While the majority of states have completed their processes of redrawing districts after the 2020 Census, it is not too early to prepare for the 2031 round of Redistricting. Redistricting determines who is elected to office and the access that constituents have to their officials. We need to Congress to outlaw political gerrymandering and prison gerrymandering, while also strengthening the Voting Rights Act. As our national elected officials, we also demand full funding of the Census Bureau to prepare for the 2030 survey, to at least 2010 levels, modified for inflation. We urge you to end partisan gerrymandering at the federal level and protect voting rights. Finally, there needs to be mechanisms in place to prevent the political manipulation of the Census that was experienced leading up to, during, and after the 2020 Census collection.

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### **Economic Justice**

Expand Medicaid and resist efforts to use block grants to strip health care from disabled and/or low-income children, elderly, and disabled Americans. By capping spending on Medicaid and enabling states to weaken the reach of the program, the block grant plan will jeopardize medical access for millions, including those who gained coverage in states that chose Medicaid expansion. The former Administration's block grant program puts countless families at risk and also contradicts Congressional intent for Medicaid.

- Protect the powers of the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau
- Raise the Federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour
- Encourage innovation by bringing high-speed Internet to every corner of America
- Support gender pay equity and require federal contractors to eliminate gender disparities in compensation; assure a minimum level of paid family leave, without preempting state/local protections
- Resist attacks on reproductive rights; reduce the cost of prescription drugs, eliminate health disparities

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### **Reimagining Public Safety**

Communities across the United States need new models to create opportunities for public safety. Improving public safety is not realized from additional police, more arrests, and more incarceration. True public safety is realized when dramatic investments are made in critical resources that address the root causes of trauma, economic insecurity, and disparities. In addition, public safety is enhanced when police (and police unions) are held accountable for their actions and to a higher standard of conduct.

To secure a reimagined criminal justice system and communities that champion public safety, we urge Congress to:

- Advance legislation that addresses gun reform,
- Promote gun violence prevention
- Raise the age of gun purchase
- Eliminate no-knock warrants, and
- Eliminate police immunity.

## DC Statehood

Every year since 1991, Congressional leaders have been presented with the opportunity to extend Statehood to the District of Columbia. The founding fathers intended the District to serve as the seat of the federal government. The legislation brought forth by Rep Eleanor Holmes Norton would shrink the national capital to a complex of capitol buildings allowing the rest of the District to become a state. Taxation Without Representation” is unacceptable when residents of the district are paying their fair share as citizens of this great democracy.

We urge every Congressional official, from every state, to support Statehood for the District of Columbia.

MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2022

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Making An **IMPACT**:  
Driving Change Through Social Action