

Alpha Kappa Alpha joins crusade to promote healthier media images of girls

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Chicago, Illinois - Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. has joined forces with the American Psychological Association, the Congressional Women's Caucus Task Group on Young Women and Troop Capitol Hill to combat media images that impact girls' self esteem by co-sponsoring H.R. 4925, the Healthy Media for Youth Act. Alpha Kappa Alpha is the first organization of its kind to support this legislation, which was introduced on March 24 by Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin and Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito.

In making the announcement, Alpha Kappa Alpha's international president Barbara A. McKinzie noted that the Internet and technology are powerful communications outlets that have altered the way youth communicate. While McKinzie acknowledged that there are some positives that filter out of the Internet, she noted a substantial amount of the media messages that bombards girls' psyche focus on their bodies, disorders and romantic relationships that are based on casual encounters. McKinzie added that that women and girls are often portrayed as sex objects in outlets that are most popular among girls. She said the recurring images that promote the "sexualization" of women, have long-term consequences on girls' self perceptions and self esteem.

Citing studies that confirm these conclusions, McKinzie reiterated the message of the campaign: "Women and girls need to be saluted for their talents, intelligence and contributions they're making to better society. This Bill represents a first step in reversing a dangerous trend.

McKinzie said that under the leadership of Alpha Kappa Alpha's international program chair, Loann Honesty King, the Sorority has mounted an all-out offensive to get members to persuade their legislators to support the Bill. This is an extension of the administration's ongoing effort to reach out to its undergraduates to lead programs on their campuses to blunt the negative messages that seep out of the media. AKA is also connecting with its graduates so they can wield their influence in this area.

In stressing the importance of this campaign, Honesty King said: "Many of the challenges young girls face can be traced to the negative images that air on television and are broadcast on the radio. This Bill seeks to provide a firewall against these depictions. At the same this legislation will serve as a filter where positive images of girls will be portrayed. At one point, these girls will grow up to be our leaders. This Bill will help boost their self esteem and psychologically position them to be productive, and healthy. In doing so, they will be better able

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to be a productive member of their family, community and the world.”