

**DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY,
INCORPORATED**

KEY ISSUES AND LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

**MARIETTA-ROSWELL
ALUMNAE CHAPTER**



**AN AT A GLANCE COMPILATION OF KEY ISSUES AND
LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

*References contained herein are for informational purposes only.
This document is nonpartisan without party affiliation, bias, or designation.*

CLIMATE CHANGE

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

Climate change has already begun to impact our planet. From the beginning of sea level rise to more extreme heat waves, climate change is increasingly playing a role in the global economy and in our everyday lives. Still, actions to reduce greenhouse gas emission and adapt to our changing environment can lessen these impacts. The effects of climate change include, but are not limited to: health risks, sea level rise, wildfires, and species loss.

WHAT CAUSES CLIMATE CHANGE?

Increased levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, from both natural and human caused sources, are the main cause of climate change. For example, the human use of fossil fuels, which releases carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the air, traps heat within the atmosphere causing effects on ecosystems--including rising sea levels, severe weather events, and droughts that render landscapes more susceptible to wildfires. Climate change deniers often claim that recent changes attributed to human activity can be seen as part of the natural variations in Earth's climate and temperature, and that it is difficult or impossible to establish a direct connection between climate change and any single weather event, such as a hurricane. While the latter is generally true, decades of data and analysis support the reality of climate change—and the human factor in this process.

WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

Climate change, also called global warming, refers to the rise in average surface temperatures on Earth. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale.

WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE?

[National Social Action WorkTool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities](#)

[2020 Presidential Candidates at a Glance, Marietta Roswell Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.](#)

[2019 Climate Action Summit Video](#)

[Global Climate Change, Vital Signs of the Planet](#)

[United Nations: Global Issues* Climate Change](#)

[Terms and Definitions Associated with Climate Change](#)

CLIMATE CHANGE

WHAT IS DELTA SIGMA THETA'S POSITION?

The March 2019 publication of Delta Sigma Theta's National Social Action Work Tool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities, explicitly states Delta's Resolutions to "Global Environmental Responsibility" (p. 135). An excerpt is below:

It is 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
- Preserve forests around the world
- Pass an energy bill consistent with current need for reduction for water and air pollution

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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.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

WHY IS CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM IMPORTANT?

Criminal Justice Reform advocates such as the SPLC and ACLU indicate that reform is important to help end the era of mass incarceration, to root out racial discrimination in the system, and to ensure humane, constitutional standards for prisoners. Moreover, SPLC is “working to reform the criminal justice and immigration enforcement systems so they operate fairly and equitably; to ensure the dignity and humanity of those interacting with these systems; and to reduce the population of jailed, detained, and incarcerated juveniles and adults in the United States.”

WHAT IS CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM?

Over the past four decades, our country’s incarceration rate has more than quadrupled. Today, roughly 2.2 million people are behind bars in the United States, an increase of 1.9 million since 1972. We have the world’s largest prison population. Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). Criminal Justice Reform is the combined use of policy, advocacy, and other strategic and tactical tools to, “to end excessively harsh criminal justice policies that result in mass incarceration, over-criminalization, and racial injustice, and stand in the way of a fair and equal society.” The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE?

National Social Action WorkTool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities

[2020 Presidential Candidates at a Glance, Marietta Roswell Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.](#)

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander

[The Marshall Project: Criminal Justice Reform](#)

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

WHAT IS DELTA SIGMA THETA'S POSITION?

The March 2019 publication of Delta Sigma Theta's National Social Action Work Tool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities, explicitly states Delta's Resolutions to "Sentencing Reform: Eliminating Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System" (pp. 96-97). An excerpt is below:

The Criminal Justice Reform Federal Legislative Priorities of Delta Sigma Theta are:

- Reform sentencing to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities
- Enact comprehensive reintegration strategies to interrupt costly cycle of recidivism
- Enact incentives to promote fair policing and to prevent excessive use of force
- Support for HR 125: Police Training and Independent Review Act of 2019

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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.

GUN CONTROL

WHY IS GUN CONTROL IMPORTANT?

Gun control has become particularly important because of the number of gun deaths in recent years. According to ProCon.org, there were 572,537 total gun deaths between 1999 and 2016. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in mass murders by guns. As indicated by ProCon, proponents for more gun control laws state that the Second Amendment was intended for militias; that gun violence would be reduced; and that a majority of Americans, including gun owners, support new gun restrictions. Conversely, opponents say that the Second Amendment protects an individual's right to own guns; that guns are needed for self-defense; and that gun ownership deters crime rather than causes more crime.

WHAT IS GUN CONTROL?

Gun control, as defined by US Legal, is a set of laws aimed to “restrict or regulate the sale, purchase, or possession of firearms through licensing, registration, or identification requirements.”

WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE?

National Social Action WorkTool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities

[Should More Gun Control Laws Be Enacted?](#)

[Gun Control Explained](#)

Black Stats by Monique Morris

GUN CONTROL

WHAT IS DELTA SIGMA THETA'S POSITION?

The March 2019 publication of Delta Sigma Theta's National Social Action WorkTool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities, explicitly states Delta's Resolution on "Enacting Gun Control Laws to Curb Gun Violence" (pp. 105-107). An excerpt is below:

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.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

WHY IS HEALTH CARE REFORM IMPORTANT?

If large numbers of people participate in a public health insurance program, it gives the government power to negotiate lower prices for health care and prescription drugs. Health care providers also do not have to spend as much time on paperwork for multiple insurance companies. Opponents of single payer (Medicare-for-all) health care, however, point out that countries with public health care often have long wait times and limited access to some treatments.

WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE?

National Social Action WorkTool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities

[2020 Presidential Candidates at a Glance, Marietta Roswell Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.](#)

[Healthcare Reform: What It Is and Why We Need It, National Institute of Health Policy](#)

[The Affordable Care Act in 2019: Still Alive](#)

America's Bitter Pill by Steven Brill

WHAT IS HEALTH CARE REFORM?

Health Care Reform refers to the process of changing the health care system, and how it works, to make it better for all Americans.

To make it better we must address three problems:

1. The quality of health care and the costs;
 2. Accessibility of health care services; and
 3. Bad practices within the health care systems.
- As an example, refusing to give someone coverage if they have a preexisting condition.

Legislatively, there is a split on how to fix the problems—particularly over the most ambitious of these plans, Single-Payer System (i.e. Medicare-for-all). Single payer health care is a system in which the government pays for health care for every citizen. Right now, private insurers, the government (through Medicare and Medicaid), and individuals all pay for health care. Medicare-for-all would move the U.S. in the direction of a single-payer system, where the government steps in (rather than insurance companies) as the intermediary between patients and providers in health care transactions. For Americans who currently have private insurance through their employers, insurance companies are the intermediaries that pay providers (hospitals and doctors), and patients often cover a part of the cost with a co-pay. In some versions of Medicare-for-all, the government would use taxes to pay for most medical services but would allow private insurance for elective procedures.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

WHAT IS DELTA SIGMA THETA'S POSITION?

The March 2019 publication of Delta Sigma Theta's National Social Action WorkTool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities, explicitly states Delta's Resolution on "Petition[ing] Congress for National Health Care" and "Health Care Disparity and Its Effect on African Americans" (pp.131-133) and "Increasing Care Providers in the African-American Community" (pp. 139-140). An excerpt is below:

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.

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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.

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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.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

WHY IS IMMIGRATION REFORM IMPORTANT?

According to ProCon.org, with over 11 million immigrants in the United States illegally, the issue of illegal immigration continues to divide Americans. Some people say that illegal immigration benefits the US economy through additional tax revenue, expansion of the low-cost labor pool, and increased money in circulation. They contend that immigrants bring good values, have motivations consistent with the American dream, perform jobs that Americans won't take, and that opposition to immigration stems from racism. Opponents of illegal immigration say that people who break the law by crossing the US border without proper documentation or by overstaying their visas should be deported and not rewarded with a path to citizenship and access to social services. They argue that people in the country illegally are criminals and social and economic burdens to law-abiding, tax-paying Americans.

WHY CAN'T IMMIGRANTS JUST "GET IN LINE"?

Most unauthorized immigrants do not have the necessary family or employment relationships and often cannot access humanitarian protection, such as refugee or asylum status. This means that no matter how long they have been in the United States, most unauthorized immigrants have no path to legal status. Even if they pay their taxes, work hard, and contribute to their communities, the only way they could "get in line" is if Congress created a new path to legal status.

WHAT IS IMMIGRATION REFORM?

Comprehensive immigration reform includes:

- A direct, fair, and inclusive path to citizenship for immigrants in the U.S. without papers
- Channels for future legal immigration that are flexible and functional
- Robust protections and guaranteed rights for all workers
- Enforcement that is targeted and fair, and respects immigrants' rights
- Full and equal rights for all immigrants.

WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE?

[National Social Action WorkTool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities](#)

[2020 Presidential Candidates at a Glance, Marietta Roswell Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.](#)

[Netflix Documentary: Living Undocumented](#)

[Georgia Public Broadcasting Documentary: America Reframed](#)

[Podcast: This Week in Immigration-Bi-Partisan Policy Center](#)

[Podcast: Immigration Nerds](#)

[Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move by Reece Jones](#)

IMMIGRATION REFORM

WHAT IS DELTA SIGMA THETA'S POSITION?

The March 2019 publication of Delta Sigma Theta's National Social Action WorkTool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities, explicitly states Delta's Resolutions on "Support of Comprehensive and Non-Discriminatory Immigration Reform" (pp. 162-166). An excerpt is below:

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.

VOTING RIGHTS

WHY ARE VOTING RIGHTS IMPORTANT?

Voting is important because it is not only a right but also a privilege. Voting lets you express your ideas and opinion on issues in our country. Voting is critical to having effective leaders at the national, state, and local levels; leaders who will address key issues, programs and policies affecting our everyday lives.

WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE?

National Social Action WorkTool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities

[2020 Presidential Candidates at a Glance, Marietta Roswell Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.](#)

The Voting Rights Act

Just Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America by Ari Berman

One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression Is Destroying Our Democracy by Dr. Carol Anderson

WHAT IS THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT?

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, aimed to overcome legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote as guaranteed under the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, was signed into law 95 years after the amendment was ratified. Despite the ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870, African Americans in the South faced tremendous obstacles to voting.

Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which aimed to increase the number of people registered to vote in areas where there was a record of previous discrimination. The legislation outlawed literacy tests and provided for the appointment of Federal examiners (with the power to register qualified citizens to vote) in certain jurisdictions with a history of voting discrimination. In addition, these jurisdictions could not change voting practices or procedures without "preclearance" from either the U.S. Attorney General or the District Court for Washington, DC. This act shifted the power to register voters from state and local officials to the federal government.

VOTING RIGHTS

WHAT IS DELTA SIGMA THETA'S POSITION?

The March 2019 publication of Delta Sigma Theta's National Social Action WorkTool, A Guide for Implementing Effective Social Action Projects and Activities, explicitly states Delta's Resolutions on "Restoration of Section 5 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the Voter Empowerment Act" and "Restoration of Ex-Offender Voting Rights" (pp.85-87); and "Restoration of Voting Rights Act of 1965 Section 4(B)" (pp. 94-96). An excerpt is below:

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.

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.

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 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.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

WHAT IS DELTA SIGMA THETA'S POSITION?

Federal Legislative Priorities as identified during Delta Days in the Nation's Capital (February 22-25, 2020).

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

- Enact comprehensive immigration reform that treats immigrants fairly and preserves families
- Enact federal policy that recognizes the extensive contributions that immigrants make to the American culture and economy

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- Reform sentencing to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities
- Enact comprehensive reintegration strategies to interrupt the costly cycle of recidivism
- Enact incentives to promote fair policing and end excessive use of force
- De-criminalize possession of cannabis

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 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/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 pre-empting state/local protections

HEALTH CARE

- Resist attacks on reproductive rights
- Bring down the cost of prescription drugs
- Eliminate health disparities

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

WHAT IS DELTA SIGMA THETA'S POSITION?

Federal Legislative Priorities as identified during Delta Days in the Nation's Capital (February 22-25, 2020).

SENSIBLE GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION MEASURES

- Appropriate funding to study the causes and cures of gun violence, including economic deprivation, suicide, gun safety education and entertainment that glorifies gratuitous violence
- Raise the age of gun purchase to twenty-one

STUDENT LOAN DEBT CRISIS

- Student loan debt has reached astronomical levels in the U.S., with 44.2 million Americans carrying an estimated \$1.48 trillion in education debt. The average class of 2017 graduate left school with \$39,400 in student loans. 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 own nearly two-thirds of student loan debt in the U.S., totaling almost \$900 billion. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 86.8 percent of black students borrow federal loans to pay for attendance at four-year colleges and are more likely to graduate with higher levels of debt than white students, and they're also more likely to default on their loans.

VOTING RIGHTS

- Incentivize nonpartisan redistricting
- Enforce laws against racial gerrymandering and other practices and procedures that inhibit the right to vote
- Restore and expand the protections of the Voting Rights Act

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IMPORTANT DATES

ELECTIONS

VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE

ELECTION DATE

Presidential Preference
Primary, General Primary
Election, Nonpartisan
General Election, and
Special Election

05/11/2020

06/09/2020

General Primary Runoff,
Nonpartisan General
Runoff, and Special
Runoff Election for Local
and State Offices

05/11/2020

08/11/2020

General
Primary Runoff Election
for Federal Offices

07/13/2020

08/11/2020

General Election and
Special Election

10/05/2020

11/03/2020

General
Election and Special
Election Runoffs for
Local and State Offices

10/05/2020

12/01/2020

General
Election Runoff for
Federal Offices

12/07/2020

01/05/2021