

ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY urges President Obama to

establish White House Council on Men and Boys

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

April 17, 2009

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the more than 200,000 men of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., congratulations on your election and inauguration. The brothers of Alpha are encouraged by the promise of hope that your presidency inspires. While still in the early stage, your administration has already shown a commitment to improving the lives of children and families and to addressing inequities that permeate our society. Your recent executive order creating the White House Council on Women and Girls is certainly a sound example.

Today, I am asking you to consider creating a White House Council on Men and Boys.

Since being founded on December 4, 1906, at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, Alpha Phi Alpha has supplied voice and vision to the struggle of African Americans and people of color around the world. Through Alpha men such as Martin Luther King, Jr., John Hope Franklin, Adam Clayton Powell, Thurgood Marshall, Andrew Young, Cornel West and many others, the fraternity has long stood at the forefront of the fight for civil and human rights and social change—for all Americans

Our mission is developing leaders and promoting brotherhood and academic excellence, while providing service and advocacy for our communities. A few examples of how Alpha has, and continues to, improve our society include our strategic partnerships with Big Brothers Big Sisters; Boy Scouts of America; March of Dimes; American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, and the American Cancer Society. Also, for more than three decades, we have worked to prevent unwanted pregnancy through our Project Alpha program which teaches teenaged-pregnancy prevention to young males. We also teach HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention in our communities.

On the education front, Alpha has for years provided scholarships to deserving young men. We expanded in 2008 with the new Alpha Phi Alpha Charitable Foundation, thanks in part to a startup grant from former Massachusetts Senator, Brother Edward Brooke. And this year, we are implementing a new initiative, *From the Highchair to Higher Education*. Its primary focus is to provide boys, at the youngest age possible, the best opportunity to successfully make it through high school and college.

Mr. President, we are keenly aware of the challenges that face women and girls. However, we believe a focus must also be placed on men and boys. As a father of a six-year old son and an eight-year old daughter, like you I want to make sure that there are well-educated, responsible and community-oriented men for them to look up to as they grow and develop.

Boys are in far graver danger than at anytime. According to a 2006 report by the Schott Foundation for Public Education, only 35 percent of black male students graduated from high school in Chicago and only 26 percent in New York City. Only a few black boys who finish high school actually attend college, and of those who enter college, nationally, only 12 percent finish with a degree.

We strongly believe to adequately address the needs of men and boys on a national level, a White House Council on Men and Boys must be ordered. We are prepared to partner with the White House on this goal and look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible to provide our ideas. Please feel free to reach me by phone or e-mail me at president@apa1906.net. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,

Herman "Skip" Mason, Jr.
General President
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.