

# Opinion: United We Stand: The Fierce Urgency Of Now

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Since the first decade of the 20th Century, Black Greek-lettered organizations have worked to protect the interests and Constitutional rights of African Americans on college campuses and in the communities they serve. Now, more than 100 years later, the 2.5 million+ members of the nine National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) organizations find themselves standing vigilant against Jim Crowesque attacks from those who seek to undermine the foundational freedoms of Black people and marginalized communities across our United States.



Emboldened by divisive white nationalist rhetoric from prominent American political leaders and influential media figures, state and local officials have introduced and adopted laws that target efforts to diminish and/or erase diversity, equity and inclusion efforts at public institutions. For example, Florida's governor recently signed legislation that bans the state's public colleges and universities from spending money on diversity, equity and inclusion programs – a clear retrograde for our nation's education system.

In addition, members of K-12 school boards across America have considered and adopted policies to severely limit students' exposure to perspectives, research and ideas that deviate from narrow – and sometimes inaccurate - depictions of American culture and history. As a result, educators have been blocked from presenting books and curricular topics that examine systems of oppression like slavery, racism, and sexism; as well as historical stories of marginalized people that overcame said oppressive systems to make this country a better place.

As a result, local school districts have been transformed into political battlegrounds where extremist activists wage divisive and faux attacks on so-called “woke culture” while seeking to impose a neo-segregationist framework in public education. This is a deliberate attempt to undermine the intent of the United States Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* by devaluing the benefits of integration and culturally inclusive curriculum. This is not a popular movement, but one driven by a small group of well-funded, extremist activists with a clear intent – to destroy public and culturally inclusive education as a public good.

Many of the same political leaders who are motivated to ban books that present difficult truths about the sins of America are utterly silent and unwilling to grapple with daunting challenges like gun violence which continues to plague the communities in which we live and serve. Issues like the irresponsibly lax availability of assault weapons, which has facilitated mass shootings of American children, should be countered with sensible gun legislation to protect the lives of all Americans.

Yet all around us, the courts and elected officials are constantly eroding our rights; including a woman's right to bodily autonomy.

A small minority of Americans appear to wield outsized influence, leaving the majority feeling increasingly disempowered. In the face of systemic social, political, and economic injustices, it's impossible to overstate the ominous impact that overturning *Roe v. Wade* will have on the lives, safety, and wellbeing of not just women, but men and families alike. Additionally, the sheer consequences of inaction at a time such as this would have a devastating impact on the lives and liberties of many generations to come.

At this pivotal moment in history, the NPHC's Council of Presidents reaffirms our commitment to civic engagement and through our chapters, will present programming to inform our communities of the potential consequences of laws that would erode or prevent the expansion of our rights.

We will stand united and steadfast in leading and organizing efforts to oppose restrictive laws and work to enact laws that will expand freedoms for all Americans.

We will continue to push our members to fully engage in the political system as voters, election volunteers and elected officials.

And like our organizations' founders and elders, we'll use our talents and resources to fight against oppression because complacency is too high a cost to pay today and sacrifice for future generations.

*Note: Submitted by Rosie Brown*

*The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated (NPHC) is currently composed of nine (9) International Greek letter Sororities and Fraternities: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. For more information, visit [www.nphchq.com](http://www.nphchq.com) or CONTACT: Donna Jones Anderson, 470-898-8655, [president@nphchq.com](mailto:president@nphchq.com).*

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