



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®

SOCIAL ADVOCACY DOS AND DON'TS RULES OF ENGAGEMENT



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Supreme Basileus
2022-2026 Administration



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated has been granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a 501(c)(7), nonprofit entity. To protect the Sorority's nonprofit, tax-exempt status, there are specific guidelines that must be followed by the Sorority and its members' involvement in political activity and advocacy. Key requirements for International Connection and Social Action Committee activities and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the political activity are provided herein. All members of the Sorority must abide by these guidelines to ensure the Sorority's compliance with IRS tax-exempt requirements.

A. REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIAL CONNECTION AND SOCIAL ACTION EVENTS

1. Only the Directorate, Supreme Basileus, or the International Connection and Social Action Committee Chairman may mobilize sorors for international/national and regional campaigns or efforts.
2. Only the International Regional Representative, or the State Coordinator, with the approval of the Regional Director, may mobilize sorors for state campaigns. It is the responsibility of the Regional Representative and the respective State Coordinator to inform the Regional Director in advance of the mobilization.
3. Chapter Connection and Social Action Committee Chairmen will mobilize members for local campaigns, subject to the approval of the chapter basileus. It is the responsibility of the Chapter Connection and Social Action Committee Chairman to inform the International Regional Representative.
4. The Regional Representative and/or State Coordinator should be provided the "Who, What, Where, When, and with Whom" details of events.
5. Sorors must know the laws of the jurisdiction where the event will take place, specifically regarding lawful public gatherings or marches.
6. If joining other groups or persons for an event, sorors should know the rules of engagement regarding lawful gatherings.
7. The advertisement of a gathering must follow the law and Sorority policy.
8. If Alpha Kappa Alpha emblems or trademarks are being used in promoting the event, ensure proper approval was provided in advance of the event.
9. At all events, safety must be a priority.

B. POLITICAL ADVOCACY - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **POLITICAL ACTIVITY & ENDORSEMENTS**
2. **AKA PARAPHERNALIA/ATTIRE AND TRADEMARKS/SYMBOLS**
3. **INVITATIONS FOR CANDIDATES TO SPEAK AT SORORITY EVENTS**
4. **CANDIDATES AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**
5. **POLITICAL/POLICY ISSUES OR AGENDAS & LEGISLATION**
6. **LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN**



1. POLITICAL ACTIVITY & ENDORSEMENTS

May chapters, regions, the Directorate, or the corporate office openly support and/or endorse individual candidates in partisan and/or nonpartisan elections?

NO.

To protect the Sorority's nonprofit, tax-exempt status, chapters, regions, the Directorate, or corporate office may not openly endorse a soror for office. However, this does not prevent the candidate from speaking during the chapter meeting, passing out literature regarding her candidacy at the meeting, requesting personal financial support from individual sorors, or making use of the chapter's mailing list. Additionally, a chapter officer or a member of the chapter may stand and state she is supporting a particular soror for office.

May a soror openly support and/or endorse individual candidates in partisan and/or nonpartisan elections?

YES.

An individual soror may support or endorse any candidate that she chooses to support. A soror may state in a Sorority meeting or publicly that, as an individual, she is supporting an individual political candidate (i.e., The Supreme Basileus may state, "I am supporting Mary Doe for president. I cannot tell you for whom to vote, but this is my choice for president."). An individual soror may not endorse an individual candidate in the name of the Sorority.

May sorors, chapters, or the corporate office write letters of endorsement on Alpha Kappa Alpha's stationery and use the writer's association with Alpha Kappa Alpha for an individual candidate for a partisan or nonpartisan office?

NO.

A letter of endorsement or support of an individual candidate on Alpha Kappa Alpha's letterhead will suggest that the local chapter and/or the national organization support the individual candidate.

May an individual soror place candidates' signs in her yard, including signs that a candidate is a Sorority sister?

YES.

An individual soror may place candidates' signs in her yard, including signs that a candidate is a Sorority sister, as long as there is no reference to Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, or any variation thereof.

May a chapter, group of sorors, or individual sorors prepare and distribute information and materials regarding voter registration, absentee voting, and polling places?

YES.

A chapter, group of sorors, or individual sorors may prepare and distribute information and materials regarding voter registration, absentee voting, and polling places.



2. AKA PARAPHERNALIA/ATTIRE AND TRADEMARKS/SYMBOLS

May an individual soror, chapter, or group of sorors wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire while engaging in campaign activities on behalf of any candidate or campaign.	NO. An individual soror, chapter, or group of sorors may not wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire while engaging in campaign activities on behalf of any candidate. An individual soror may wear paraphernalia or Sorority attire while conducting personal business such as traveling, running errands, grocery shopping, etc.
May an individual soror wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire when going to the polls to cast their vote?	YES. An individual soror may wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire when going to the polls to cast their vote.
May a chapter or group of sorors wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire, or attire of any candidate, while serving as poll workers?	NO. A chapter or group of sorors may not wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire, or attire of any candidate while serving as poll workers.
May an individual soror wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire while attending a political event, such as a political fundraiser, campaign event, political debate, or candidate town hall, if attending alone?	YES. An individual soror may wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire while attending a political event, such as a political fundraiser, campaign event, political debate, or candidate town hall, if attending alone.
May a chapter or group of sorors wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire in this circumstance?	NO. A chapter or group of sorors may not wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire attending a political fundraiser, campaign event, political debate or candidate town hall that is likely to have high soror attendance.
May an individual soror wear pink and green attire to political functions and to volunteer with a candidate's campaign?	YES. An individual soror MAY wear pink and green attire to political functions and to volunteer with a candidate's campaign.
May candidates for political office in a partisan and /or nonpartisan election come to a Sorority meeting to speak about his/her candidacy and solicit support?	YES. The Sorority meeting may be used as a forum for the education of the sorors about the candidates and their platforms.
May an individual soror wear VOTE-themed paraphernalia when registering voters and/or passing out information and materials regarding voter registration, absentee and early voting, and polling places?	YES. An individual soror may wear VOTE-themed paraphernalia when registering voters and/or passing out information and materials regarding voter registration, absentee and early voting, and polling places.



<p>May a chapter or group of sorors or an individual soror wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire with “VOTE” themes if accompanied by the candidate or party references or campaign-specific information?</p>	<p>NO. A chapter or group of sorors or an individual soror may not wear Sorority paraphernalia or attire with “VOTE” themes if accompanied by the candidate or party references or campaign-specific information.</p>
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<p>May Alpha Kappa Alpha trademarks or symbols (i.e., skee-wee, pinkies) be used in political campaign materials or associated with or during campaign activities.</p>	<p>NO. Alpha Kappa Alpha trademarks or symbols may not be used in political campaign materials, nor associated with or during any campaign activities.</p>
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3. INVITATIONS FOR CANDIDATES TO SPEAK AT SORORITY EVENTS

<p>Do all the candidates running for the same position have to be invited to speak at the chapter meeting?</p>	<p>NO. All the candidates do not have to be invited to speak at the chapter meeting. However, for candidates’ forums, candidates for the same position are invited to prevent any appearance of partisanship.</p>
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<p>Can an elected official, who also is running for office, be invited individually to speak in a public setting?</p>	<p>YES, under certain circumstances. A candidate may be invited to speak in their official capacity as an elected official ONLY if the program is: 1) focused on the policies of their current office; or 2) their expertise on a policy impacting any one of the Sorority’s initiatives or the official AKA Advocacy Agenda. However, their candidacy for political office cannot be mentioned.</p>
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<p>May a candidate’s name be placed on the agenda for the meeting?</p>	<p>YES. There is no restriction on informing the sorors of who the proposed speakers are for the meeting.</p>
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<p>Should the type of office that the candidate is seeking determine whether the candidate is invited to speak to the Sorority (i.e., partisan, or nonpartisan positions, local or national)?</p>	<p>NO. Legally, the Sorority may invite any candidate to speak to inform the sorors of their positions on issues.</p>
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4. CANDIDATES AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

<p>May a chapter and/or corporate office give a campaign contribution, from the dues collected from the membership to an individual candidate in a partisan and/or nonpartisan election?</p>	<p>NO.</p>
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May a candidate seeking partisan or non-partisan office solicit contributions from individual members during a meeting of a chapter, region, or the Boule?	NO.
May a chapter, region, and/or Directorate solicit contributions from individual sorors in support of an individual candidate for a partisan and/or nonpartisan election, place the proceeds in an Alpha Kappa Alpha financial account and forward the Alpha Kappa Alpha campaign contribution using an Alpha Kappa Alpha check?	NO. Campaign contributions to an individual candidate may not come from an Alpha Kappa Alpha financial account.
May a chapter, region, Connection and Social Action Committee, or the Corporate Office use a Sorority mailing list to organize a fundraising activity in support of a particular candidate for a partisan and/or nonpartisan position?	NO. The fundraiser cannot be sponsored in the name of the Sorority or any of its committees. However, a group of sorors may join and organize a campaign fundraiser. The chapter mailing list may be used to invite individual sorors to a campaign function.
May a Sorority house or any building owned by the Sorority be used to host a campaign fundraiser for an individual candidate?	NO.
May the chapter name or the Alpha Kappa Alpha name and/or logo be used as a contributing sponsor of a fundraiser for a candidate for a partisan and/or nonpartisan position?	NO.
May a soror's name with an Alpha Kappa Alpha designation, (i.e., Jane Doe, President, Ivy Pearl Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. or Mary Doe, National President, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.) be used as a sponsor of a fundraiser for a partisan and/or nonpartisan campaign fundraiser for an individual candidate?	NO.
May individual sorors wear Alpha Kappa Alpha paraphernalia while campaigning for a candidate for a partisan and/or nonpartisan office?	NO. It is the policy of Alpha Kappa Alpha that sorors do not wear Sorority paraphernalia while campaigning for a candidate.



<p>Are there any rules or conditions that a soror must follow when working in political campaign headquarters for a partisan and/or nonpartisan election?</p>	<p>YES. The soror working on a campaign must watch the statements and suggestions that she makes. She may not say or do anything to suggest that the Sorority is endorsing the candidate.</p>
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5. POLITICAL/POLICY ISSUES OR AGENDAS & LEGISLATION

<p>May a chapter, region, or Corporate Office support political issues or agendas?</p>	<p>YES. As a nonprofit corporation, the Sorority is empowered to support political issues and/or agendas. When advocating a position on local matters, there should be a chapter consensus.</p>
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<p>May an individual soror, chapter, region or member of the Directorate use the Alpha Kappa Alpha name, letterhead, or logo in support of a political issue or agenda?</p>	<p>YES. However, the use of the Alpha Kappa Alpha's name is permissible only when it has been pre-approved, in each instance, by the Directorate or the Boule.</p>
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<p>May a political issue, agenda, or legislation be discussed during the meeting of a chapter, region, Boule, or Directorate?</p>	<p>YES. Part of our responsibility to our membership is to inform them of the effect that different legislation may have on our communities. Individuals may be invited to meetings to discuss and explain different social and political issues and agendas.</p>
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<p>Is a chapter, region, or Directorate limited in the scope or types of issues that it may support or address?</p>	<p>YES. The Sorority should only take positions on issues that are related to the purposes and ideals of the Sorority.</p>
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<p>May the chapter or the Corporate Office use proceeds from the dues of the members to support political issues, and agendas, or influence legislation?</p>	<p>NO. It is the policy of the Alpha Kappa Alpha to not use proceeds from the dues of the members to support social, political issues, and agendas or to influence legislation.</p>
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<p>May a chapter, region, or Directorate collect individual contributions from sorors to support social, and political issues, and agendas or to influence legislation?</p>	<p>YES.</p>
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<p>May the individual contributions from the sorors be deposited in an Alpha Kappa Alpha account and then may one check be written from the Sorority account as a contribution in support of social, and political issues, and agendas or to influence legislation.</p>	<p>NO. It is the policy of Alpha Kappa Alpha to support and encourage individual sorors to make contributions in support of social and political issues or to influence legislation. It is the policy of the Alpha Kappa Alpha to avoid the use of chapter resources or the appearance of the use of chapter resources for this purpose unless pre-approved by the Directorate or the Boule.</p>
<p>May a chapter, region, or Directorate organize a fundraiser to solicit contributions to support a social or political issue, agenda, or influence legislation?</p>	<p>NO. It is the policy of Alpha Kappa Alpha to encourage individual sorors to lend financial support. Alpha Kappa Alpha does not organize fundraisers in support of social or political issues, or agendas, or to influence legislation.</p>
<p>May the advertisement for a fundraiser to solicit funds in support of a social or political issue, or to influence legislation include Alpha Kappa Alpha's name and/or logo or specifically indicate that it is sponsored by Alpha Kappa Alpha?</p>	<p>NO. It is the policy of Alpha Kappa Alpha to avoid the use of its name to solicit funds in support of social or political issues.</p>
<p>Under what conditions may a soror work in the campaign headquarters established to support a political issue or influence legislation?</p>	<p>An individual soror is encouraged to work in campaigns that support Alpha Kappa Alpha's legislative values. However, the soror must not suggest that the Sorority is supporting the issue unless she has the written approval of the Directorate.</p>

6. LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGNS

<p>May a soror, chapter, or region participate in a letter-writing campaign in support of a social or political issue, or agenda or to influence legislation?</p>	<p>YES.</p>
<p>May a soror, chapter or region use Alpha Kappa Alpha's letterhead or the Alpha Kappa Alpha name in the letter in support of a social or political issue, agenda or to influence legislation?</p>	<p>YES. Alpha Kappa Alpha's letterhead may be used if it has been determined by the Directorate or the Boule that Alpha Kappa Alpha is supporting the issue. It is not a violation of a statute or the IRS rules governing the participation of nonprofit corporations in political activities to support an issue or influence legislation related to their purposes and ideals.</p>



<p>If Alpha Kappa Alpha’s letterhead or the Alpha Kappa Alpha name and/or logo are used in a letter writing campaign, should the content of the letter be pre-approved, by the respective chapter, region or the corporate office before the letter is disseminated?</p>	<p>YES.</p>
<p>May a soror, chapter or region encourage the support of a political issue, by soliciting letters from individual sorors, which are not written on Alpha Kappa Alpha’s letterhead, or do not include Alpha Kappa Alpha’s name during chapter, regional or national meetings?</p>	<p>YES. Individual sorors may be encouraged to support a particular issue during a meeting where Alpha Kappa Alpha’s business is considered. However, the issue should be related to the ideals and purposes of the Sorority.</p>

C. GUIDELINES FOR MARCHES, RALLIES, PROTESTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Attendance at marches and rallies is one way to show support for an issue. Sorors may participate in such activities as individuals and may wear AKA paraphernalia. Chapters may participate in such activities if the participation is in the name of the chapter. A banner with the name of the chapter and Sorority may be used.

Sorors may **not** participate in marches and rallies in the name of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated unless pre-approved in writing by the Supreme Basileus or the Directorate.

The following guidelines **must** be followed when participating in marches, rallies, and/or protest activities:

1. Do not make statements that are or can be constructed as a position of the Sorority.
2. The International President (Supreme Basileus) is the **only** spokesperson for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., unless she delegates this authority to someone else in writing.
3. Chapter basilei and/or designated chapter officers are permitted to share words of “greeting” on behalf of the chapter at marches, rallies, and/or protest activities. (See attached sample ***greeting*** template)
4. Be concise in your greetings. Do not stray from the written script.
5. Never partner with a partisan group or one that endorses candidates.
6. If you choose to engage in marches, rallies, or other events similar in nature without the written approval of the International President or the Directorate, you are solely responsible for yourself and your activities. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., disclaims all responsibilities and liability for any injury or damage that may result from your participation.



D. GUIDELINES FOR POLITICAL FORUMS & DEBATES

In preparation for an election, chapters may decide to host political forums and debates to introduce candidates or public policy issues to the community. Chapters are encouraged to host activities if proponents and opponents of an issue or candidates from all political parties are invited. Chapters are encouraged to collaborate with other chapters and organizations such as the NAACP and Greek-letter organizations.

Public Forums

In general, public officials welcome opportunities to meet and discuss community concerns with their constituents. These discussions help them to assess community concerns. Chapters may wish to collaborate with other community organizations to facilitate such meetings. Remember, targeted questions that require concrete responses will lead the public official to think more deeply about the issues that are of interest to the Sorority and to the community.

Candidates' Forums

An effective way to engage your community and publicize your chapter's interest in issues affecting public policy is to host a candidates' forum. The forum allows concerned chapter members and other voters an opportunity to become better informed about their choices for elected representatives.

While IRS regulations prevent tax-exempt organizations like Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. from supporting or opposing candidates, they do allow such organizations to host nonpartisan candidates' forum. According to the IRS, such forums are an acceptable form of voter education.

What is a Candidates' Forum?

A candidates' forum allows candidates for public office to express their views openly so audience members can understand their positions and make informed voting choices. Possible formats include the following:

- Candidate speeches
- Panel discussion
- Audience question-and-answer session

Whatever the format, the forum must allow each invited candidate an equal and fair opportunity to express his or her position on issues.

After hosting an event, a letter should be written to the official and other participants, expressing appreciation for the opportunity to dialogue. If the official or other participant is in accord with the chapter's position, the chapter should express gratitude and support. If not, express disagreement and ask for further clarification of their position and state your opinion courteously and respectfully.



Checklist for Planning a Political Forum or Debate

Logistics:

- Invitations: Candidates, Special Guests, General Public
- Media: Press Release(s), Publicity, Flyers, Media contacts
- Program: Format, Rules
- Staging: Props – Chairs, Tables; Audio Visual
- Moderator(s)
- Printing, copying, etc.

Deadlines:

- Invitations to Participants; the follow-up, the deadline to respond.
- Program for Forum
- Special Guest List
- Invitations to Special Guests
- Press Release(s)
- Flyers

E. GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF SUPPORT

There are several guidelines that sorors must consider to ensure the safety of all participants at public events.

- Sorority members are asked first and foremost to be mindful of safety.
- Contact your State Coordinator and/or Regional Representative to the International Connection and Social Action Committee with the Who, What, When, Where, and with whom details for each event.
- Know the laws of the jurisdiction where the event will take place regarding lawful public gatherings or marches.
- If joining others, know their rules of engagement regarding lawful gatherings.
- Be mindful of how the gathering is being advertised and promoted in the community.
- If Alpha Kappa Alpha emblems or trademarks are being used in promoting the event, ensure proper approval was given by the Supreme Basileus, Corporate Office or designee.



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