



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1134-2025, **Version:** *

Preconsidered Res. No. 1134

Resolution declaring January 15 as Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated Day in the City of New York in recognition of the sorority’s enduring service, scholarship, and positive impact on families and communities.

By The Speaker (Council Member Adams) and Council Members Farías and Louis

Whereas, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (AKA) is a nonprofit Black Greek-Letter Organization (BGLO) of college-educated women focused on national and international issues including economics, education, the environment, human rights, equity, and social and political activism; and

Whereas AKA’s mission, which has remained constant since its founding almost 118 years ago, is “to cultivate and encourage high scholastic and ethical standards, to promote unity and friendship among college women, to study and help alleviate problems concerning girls and women in order to improve their social stature, to maintain a progressive interest in college life, and to be of ‘Service to All Mankind’”; and

Whereas, AKA was founded at Howard University’s Miner Hall in Washington, D.C., on January 15, 1908, making it the first of the four BGLOs for college-educated women; and

Whereas, AKA’s founding members were nine juniors and seniors who were students at Howard University, one of the nation’s most distinguished Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); and

Whereas, AKA’s founding members, who were among the fewer than 1,000 Black students enrolled in U.S. colleges at the time and among just 25 women who graduated from Howard University between 1908 and 1911, went on to excel in the fields of education and social work; and

Whereas, In 1930, AKA became a founding member of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, which is the coordinating body of BGLOs of college-educated women and men committed to “community awareness and action through educational, economic, and cultural service activities,” whose nine sorority and fraternity

member organizations are now known affectionately as the “Divine Nine”; and

Whereas, AKA, whose motto is By Culture and By Merit, currently has a membership of more than 380,000 women in more than 1,096 undergraduate and graduate chapters throughout the U.S. and in other countries around the world; and

Whereas, As the first sorority to be granted observer status at the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1946, AKA helped draft the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and was recognized in 2009 by the UN as a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the ECOSOC, based on AKA’s work in women’s rights and global poverty; and

Whereas, The Epsilon Pi Omega Chapter of AKA is a graduate chapter, which was chartered in Queens, New York, in 1950, and now serves as the sponsor of the young women of Nu Mu, AKA’s undergraduate chapter located on the Queens campuses of St. John’s University, Queens College of The City University of New York (CUNY), and CUNY’s York College; and

Whereas, AKA members-through undergraduate and graduate chapters across the five boroughs-have contributed countless voluntary hours and leadership to New York City (NYC) neighborhoods, strengthening families, mentoring youth, supporting schools, fostering college access and persistence, and uplifting communities; and

Whereas, Through various signature initiatives and partnerships, AKA chapters promote the attainment of education and lifelong learning, champion women’s and family health, expand economic opportunity and financial literacy, support small businesses and HBCUs, encourage environmental stewardship, advance civic engagement and social justice, and provide global and local service; and

Whereas, AKA programs such as the Childhood Hunger Initiative Power Pack (AKA CHIPPTM) focuses on feeding needy students, thus ensuring that they have a few non-perishable meals and snacks for the weekends and on holidays, and the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) focuses on middle school students, supporting them in connecting with other youth in person during frequent meetings where they experience the

bonds of friendship, mentorship, and leadership skills; and

Whereas, AKA programs have been generated to strengthen the AKA sisterhood, based on shared goals and the commitment to serve others; to empower AKA families by addressing childhood hunger, promoting youth leadership, and supporting mental well-being for families across generations; to build foundations for economic wealth, covering topics like personal financial planning, asset accumulation, managing debt, and improving credit; to enhance the environment by employing strategies to improve and protect the environment; to advocate for social justice by equipping communities with tools and knowledge to advocate and to enable them to mobilize for change; and to uplift local communities by focusing on local action to create global impact and make positive changes within those communities; and

Whereas, AKA has launched a keen focus with multiple efforts on women's health care and wellness, aiming to raise awareness for health issues impacting African-American women, with focuses on breast cancer awareness, heart health, nutrition, and caregiver support; and on arts education, promoting arts enrichment and culture by exposing communities to the visual and performing arts, showcasing local and national talent through various artistic endeavors, and engaging in global impact programs designed to expand the sorority's international footprint and influence; and

Whereas, These sustained efforts have directly benefitted New Yorkers of every age and background, including students, educators, seniors, Veterans, small-business owners, and new immigrant families, and have contributed to academic success, public health, neighborhood vitality, and economic resilience; and

Whereas, AKA members have made significant contributions in the fields of literature and science, including Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Katherine Johnson, and Mae Jemison; and

Whereas, AKA members have made significant contributions in the fields of entertainment and sports, including Phylicia Rashad, Ava DuVernay, Gladys Knight, Ella Fitzgerald, Marian Anderson, Jessye Norman, Brandy, Wanda Sykes, Alicia Keys, Althea Gibson, and A'ja Wilson; and

Whereas, AKA members have made significant contributions in the fields of government and civil rights, including Coretta Scott King and her daughter Bernice King, Rosa Parks, former U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and other members of the U.S. Congress, state elected officials, and local elected officials, including members of the New York City Council; and

Whereas, As *The New Yorker* pointed out in an October 2024 article, AKA members include the first woman elected President of an African country, “the first Black woman to go to space, the first Women’s National Basketball Association player to score more than a thousand points, the first Black female mayor of a major American city, the first Black women to lead the Treasure and Energy Departments, the first Black woman to win a Grand Slam...and the first Black woman to become a major party’s Presidential candidate”; and

Whereas, In speaking at AKA’s 71st international biennial convention in July 2024, then Vice President Harris, who became an AKA member as a senior at Howard University, noted that AKA was founded “to create desperately needed social and legal change and to build networks of support for Black college women” before women had the right to vote and when there were not yet any Black members of the U.S. House of Representatives; and

Whereas, Vice President Harris continued that AKA members for a very long time “have been on the front lines to realize the promise of America” and called on her fellow AKA members to “continue that work... [to] fight for freedom, opportunity, and equality...[to] fight with optimism, with faith, and hope”; and

Whereas, AKA members are often easily recognized by their devotion to the sorority’s official colors of salmon pink and apple green; and

Whereas, The City of New York recognizes organizations whose consistent, measurable service strengthens the social fabric and reflects NYC’s values of equity, opportunity, and community; and

Whereas, NYC agencies, community organizations, schools, cultural institutions, and individual New Yorkers may observe this day with appropriate programs, volunteer service, and educational activities that

highlight and advance the values exemplified by AKA; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York declares January 15 as Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated Day in the City of New York in recognition of the sorority's enduring service, scholarship, and positive impact on families and communities.

LS #20716
11/5/25
RHP