

# The Washington Post

## Alpha Kappa Alpha's White House Entree



Barbara A. McKinzie  
(Susan Biddle/*The Washington Post*)

*By Nikita Stewart*

When President Obama signed an executive order to create the Economic Recovery Advisory Board today, the president of the country's first sorority founded by black women was in the room.

Barbara A. McKinzie, president of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, said in an e-mail to members that she received an invitation to be a witness at the White House because of the sorority's platform on economics.

The platform is known as ESP, an acronym for Economics, Sisterhood and Partnerships, and is used by graduate and undergraduate chapters to promote entrepreneurship and economic success among members.

McKinzie's appearance today appears to be another example of the reach of the Obama administration. The sorority, founded on the campus of Howard University in 1908, has more than 200,000 members. McKinzie's e-mail was blasted to about 30,000 members, said Melody McDowell, a spokeswoman for the sorority.

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The sorority also has a long list of Facebook fans who frequently link to McKinzie's e-mails.

McKinzie ended her e-mail by asking members to support Obama's "crusade to lead the nation out of economic peril" by contacting Congress.

"Insist that they not get bogged down in partisan politics, petty bickering or other divisive acts that thwart progress. The time for decisive action is NOW," she wrote. "President Obama's resolve to fix the economy, get people back to work, seek progressive change and restore America to its global standing captivated the nation and catapulted him to victory. Now that he has assumed the mantle of leadership, we must unite with him as he forcefully takes on this economic crisis."

In July, the sorority celebrated its 100th anniversary in Washington. Members cheered when Obama announced in a videotaped message that Michelle Obama would accept honorary membership. One of the hottest-selling T-shirts during the conference was one that featured Obama's face in pink and green, the sorority's colors.