



Poor People's Campaign, National Pan-Hellenic Council hold town hall on COVID-19 impact on African American & poor, low-income communities

The Council of Presidents of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) is announcing its full endorsement and support of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival and the call for a digital Mass Poor People's Assembly and Moral March on Washington on June 20, 2020.

The groups will join forces at 7 p.m. Eastern on Tuesday, May 26, for a town hall titled "Call to Action and Conscience: Racism, Poverty and the Pandemic" to build momentum for the digital [assembly and march](#) and to highlight the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on African Americans and poor and low-income communities.

"The Council of Presidents of the National Pan Hellenic Council recognizes the importance of collectively addressing poverty in America," Dr. Everett Ward, chair of the NPHC Council of Presidents and General President of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., said Tuesday. "As supporters of the Poor People's Campaign, the Council of Presidents will utilize its united voices during the webinar and the June 20th campaign to fight against poverty."

[The NPHC](#), representing nine African American Greek-letter fraternities and sororities and affectionately referred to as the "Divine Nine," is joining forces with the Poor People's Campaign to build a movement to force the nation to address the interlocking crises of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism.

The partnership was formed after a meeting earlier this month with Bishop William J. Barber II, DMin, co-chair of the campaign, along with Ward, the nine council presidents and their staff. At that meeting, the NPHC agreed to challenge its organizations to sign up at least 20% of their memberships for the digital assembly and march.

"The time is now! The NPHC will use our collective power to ensure that underserved and underrepresented communities have a voice that will not be ignored," said Vanetta Cheeks Reeder, National President of the NPHC. "We all joined our various organizations understanding that we are 'our brother and our sister's keeper.'"

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that African Americans make up 13.4% of this country's population. But a recent study released by Amfar shows that counties with higher black populations account for more than half of all COVID-19 cases and almost 60% of deaths.

And even before the crisis of the pandemic, this nation suffered from the crisis of poverty -- 140 million Americans, or 43%, were poor or low-income. That included 60.4% of black people (26 million),; 64.1% of Latinx people (38 million), 40.8% of Asian people (8 million), 58.9% of Native and indigenous people (2.14 million), and 33.5% of white people (66 million).

“It is crucial that our collegiate body support the efforts of movements such as the Poor People’s Campaign,” said Kasey A. Coleman, National Chairman of the NPHC National Undergraduate Leadership Council and International Second Vice President of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. “As a younger generation, we must leave our world in a better state than we found it, whether that be socially, culturally, economically or more. This begins with uplifting the voices of poverty to encourage moral change in America.”

The council joins over 100 national partners in the Poor People’s Campaign that are building toward the digital assembly and march.

The town hall will be available here: www.breachrepairers.org/livestream.

The Poor People’s Campaign “is bringing together a mighty fusion movement to end poverty, end racism and save the planet from climate change and war,” Rev. Dr. Alvin Jackson, national executive director of the assembly march, and Rev. Erica Williams, co-lead and director of student organizing, said in a statement. “We are so proud to stand with our brothers and sisters from the NPHC to uphold its long tradition of social activism and justice work. Now more than ever we need the NPHC to join hands with faith, labor and civil and human rights organizations to stand up to the forces that threaten our democracy and the soul of our nation.”

The presidents and public health professionals will discuss the dire risk that COVID-19 poses to the African American community and demand a more coordinated federal response.

Other speakers will include Nakiya Wakes of Flint, Michigan, who twice miscarried twins because of the poisoned water in Flint, and Rev. Carolyn Foster, a tri-chair of the Alabama state chapter of the Poor People’s Campaign.

On June 20, the Poor People’s Campaign will hold the largest digital and social media gathering of poor and low-income people, moral and religious leaders, advocates, and people of conscience in this nation’s history.

The National Pan-Hellenic Council Inc. is composed of nine international Greek-letter sororities and fraternities: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity Inc.

The council leaders are: Dr. Everett B. Ward, General President of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and Chairman of Council of Presidents, National Pan-Hellenic Council; Dr. Glenda Glover, International President of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; Reuben A. Shelton III, Esq., Grand Polemarch of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; Dr. David Marion, Grand Basileus of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.; Beverly E. Smith, National President and CEO of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; Micheal E. Cristal, International President of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.; Valerie Hollingsworth Baker; International Centennial President of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.;

Deborah Catchings-Smith, International Grand Basileus of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.;
Andre R. Mason, International Grand Polaris of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. and Vanetta
Cheeks Reeder, National Pan-Hellenic Council President.

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The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, is building a generationally transformative digital gathering called the [_Mass Poor People's Assembly and Moral March on Washington](#), on June 20, 2020. At that assembly, we will demand that both major political parties address the interlocking injustices of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, militarism and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism by implementing our [_Moral Agenda](#)

The National Pan-Hellenic Council was founded on May 10, 1930, at Howard University in Washington, D.C., with five chartering organizations and now has nine organizations. Its purpose is to foster cooperative actions of its members in dealing with matters of mutual concern. The NPHC promotes the well-being of its affiliate fraternities and sororities, facilitates the establishment and development of local councils, and provides leadership training for its constituents.