

NAACP urges Black student-athletes to reconsider Florida colleges amid DEI feud



The NAACP issued a call to Black student-athletes to reconsider decisions to attend public colleges in Florida in response to a new state policy preventing institutions from utilizing government funds for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs. Photo: NNPA NEWSWIRE

NAACP president and CEO Derrick Johnson has called on Black student-athletes to reconsider their decisions to attend public colleges and universities in Florida. The call comes in response to a new state policy preventing institutions from utilizing government funds for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs.

In a letter sent to current and prospective student-athletes of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) on Monday, March 11, NBC News reported that Johnson urged them to "choose wisely" amidst the ongoing debate surrounding DEI funding in Florida.

He emphasized the crucial role of diversity, equity, and inclusion in ensuring equitable and effective educational outcomes, noting that Black athletes' value to large universities is unmatched.

The controversy stems from a bill signed

by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis last year, restricting public colleges and universities from using state and federal funds for DEI programs. "If these institutions are unable to completely invest in those athletes, it's time they take their talents elsewhere," Johnson declared, according to NBC News.

The University of Florida's recent decision to eliminate all DEI positions, complying with the state rule, drew condemnation from NFL Hall of Famer Emmitt Smith, an alum of the school. Smith emphasized the need or minority athletes to be aware and vocal about such decisions.

The trend against DEI programs has heightened, with Republican politicians in more than 30 states introducing bills to restrict or regulate such efforts. Texas Governor Greg Abbott, for instance, signed a law last year ordering the closure of DEI offices

at state-funded colleges and universities.

The NAACP's call comes on the heels of a similar message from Birmingham, Alabama, Mayor Randall Woodfin, who asserted that if his state passed a bill blocking funding for DEI in public colleges, he would encourage student-athletes to explore programs in other states.

Florida's significance in Division

I athletics and its central role in college sports business are one issue the NAACP zeroed in on. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the University of Florida's sports teams generated over \$177 million in revenue from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022.

"If any institution is to reap the benefits of Black talent, it is only right that they completely invest in Black futures," Johnson argued.

On Cloud 9

Sorority sisters gather to celebrate chartering anniversary

Story and Photos
By Eva D. Coleman
Lifestyle & Culture Editor

Congratulations to Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated* Omega Alpha Omega chapter on nine years of service to the Denton, Frisco, Little Elm, Prosper and The Colony, Texas communities. The chapter was chartered on International Women's Day, March 8, 2015.

Members gathered at Sidecar Social at the conclusion of their monthly chapter meeting on March 9, 2024 for their "On Cloud 9" celebration that included food, games, conversations and fun!

Omega Alpha Omega is currently led by President LaWanna Willis. Former presidents Tuere Williams and Alana Miller were in attendance at the celebration as well. Chartering president Patrice Withers-Stephens and former president Alice Walker were not in attendance, yet extended their love and support.

Adorned in pink, white and pearls, the sorority sisters took over the top floor of the venue. The elevated celebration aligns with how the Omega Alpha Omega chapter is always "Soaring to Greater Heights of Service and Sisterhood," which is the sorority's current international administration theme.



AKA Omega Alpha Omega former chapter president Tuere Williams at 9th anniversary event at Sidecar Social in Frisco, Texas March 9, 2024



AKA Omega Alpha Omega chapter members enjoying food at 9th anniversary event at Sidecar Social in Frisco, Texas March 9, 2024



AKA Omega Alpha Omega chapter president LaWanna Willis and former president Alana Miller at 9th anniversary event at Sidecar Social in Frisco, Texas March 9, 2024



AKA Omega Alpha Omega chapter hostess Autumn Lawson at 9th anniversary event at Sidecar Social in Frisco, Texas March 9, 2024



AKA Omega Alpha Omega chapter members enjoying conversation at 9th anniversary event at Sidecar Social in Frisco, Texas March 9, 2024



AKA Omega Alpha Omega members Eva D. Coleman and Roxie Jackson at 9th anniversary event at Sidecar Social in Frisco, Texas March 9, 2024

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