

## AKA National president denounces Republican Party attack on Michelle Obama

Chicago, IL (BlackNews.com) - Barbara A. McKinzie, Alpha expressed indignation and outrage over the Tennessee Republican Party running a smear campaign against Michelle Obama, wife of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama. McKinzie denounced the transparent mindset that triggered the decision by the Tennessee GOP to design such an ad. She said it is the basis of an ugly underpinning that is being echoed in established racist Internet chat rooms, within the right-leaning blogosphere and among some conservative pundits. To make Michelle Obama a target of a potentially hate-inspired offensive is something that she -- and the 200,000 primarily African-American female members she leads -- will not tolerate.

"The impulse to take a statement of hers out of context and make it a focus of an unpatriotic ad is to trivialize her and to attempt to devalue her," said McKinzie. "This is unacceptable!"

She said the ad appeals to the subconscious racial fears of a sliver of Americans who remain unaware of progress. "This intransigent posture," said McKinzie, "defies the American ideal of democracy and fairness, the bedrock of the Constitution." McKinzie said at a time when the economy should be the issue around which Americans should unite, using a fringe element to stoke racial fears is a temporary distraction. Emphasizing that point, McKinzie said, "The fragile state of America's economic psyche threatens the

viability of this nation. Alpha Kappa Alpha has made economics a major focus through the ESP program that is the theme of this administration. Putting America's psyche on a strong financial global footing needs to be front and center on everyone's mind -- not polarizing messages that fan the flames of historical racial prejudice. We must snuff out the embers of racial fear that the ad attempts to ignite," declared McKinzie.

In lambasting the ad, McKinzie took a cue from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice who acknowledged that the United States still has trouble dealing with race because of a national "birth defect" that denied black Americans the opportunities given to whites at the country's very founding. "This ad," stressed McKinzie, "is nothing less than a very public display of America's 'birth defect.'"

"Given the historical challenges facing American women, the resolve should be to improve the stature of American women rather than to denigrate them," declared McKinzie.

She challenged all fair-thinking citizens -- including President George W. Bush, Senator Hillary Clinton and Secretary of State Rice -- to join Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority in denouncing the ad and the climate of intolerance that prompted its creation.

She said she would galvanize members and wage a counteroffensive by speaking out, writing letters, issuing statements and signaling that these types of acts will trigger a solidarity that will combat offensive messages.

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