

Karen N, Lambda Xi Chapter of Delta Zeta, Texas A&M, Class of 1994

Dear Cindy,

I'm writing to you, woman to woman, regarding Payton McNabb's expulsion. I spent the weekend angry at Delta Zeta and vowing to disaffiliate with the organization. On my run this morning, I realized I'm not angry with the members, active or alumni, but astonished and deeply disappointed with the woman in charge.

Cindy, we both grew up in the '80s with Nancy Reagan's fried egg warning not to do drugs and McGruff's "take a bite out of crime," AIDS, car safety, airline hijackings, and serial murders. We were inundated with scary stuff on the news, yet we were free as birds to learn and experience many things on our own that our parents probably never knew about. When I was 10 years old, a man lured me up to the passenger of his fancy red Thunderbird while walking to soccer practice. When I approached the window, I saw he was naked from the waist down. *As we grew up, we developed instincts about the dangers around us as women, primarily strange men.* We listened to the warnings on the news and from our mothers and grandmothers. We comforted our friends who did not listen to the warnings. And maybe we didn't listen either. I shouldn't have answered the door to the college boy who climbed onto my balcony that fateful November evening of 1995, my sophomore year at Texas A&M University. Remember that time before cell phones? When our cars broke down or got a flat tire, a man pulled off to help us. *Instinctively, we all prayed to God that this man wasn't a killer or a rapist.*

Based on our lived experiences, there are some undeniable truths for women our age. **Truths we are obligated to teach our younger sisters.** We are wary of gas stations and convenience stores at night. We are on guard in parking garages. We lock our doors when we get in the car. We check in with our loved ones when we travel alone. We know how many others are in a public restroom. We check for feet, and as we open the door to what we hope is an empty stall, we steel ourselves in case there is a predator in there, ready to attack from atop the toilet. We escort our babies through parking garages and into public restrooms and warn them of the potential dangers in hopes that they will never fall victim to a violent encounter that could have been avoided.

I am a runner. I run with a taser. I take photos and videos of cars that circle me more than twice on a run. I let others know. I ask you... what is the difference between my actions of keeping my neighbors and fellow runners safe and Payton's warning women of the danger she encountered with the man in the ladies' room? If my post about the white van circling me on my run prevents a kidnapping or murder, then I am a hero. But, if the van circling me is just a lost man, am I a lost man phobe? Am I shaming a man for not being able to use the Maps app properly? Am I not obligated to let my neighbors know there's a potential community threat? White windowless vans have a terrible reputation because bad things happen in white windowless vans. Don't be fooled like I was 10 years old; bad things can also occur in fancy red Thunderbirds. Men are not permitted in the ladies' room because bad things happen when they are. ***Fancy red cars or yellow dresses don't magically transform potentially dangerous men into innocuous, well-meaning men.***

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As women who have lived through tragedy and understand what can happen “if”... we are ***obligated*** to teach our younger generations to be safe. How can we not? I do not want my niece, starting college in a year, to open that balcony door to the man who climbed up to knock on it. I will do everything in my power to ensure her safety. ***I don’t care who that offends. I will not light her on fire to keep someone else warm.***

By condemning Payton, you are quite literally telling our younger generations not to listen to their guts, to the news, to their mothers and grandmothers. ***You are telling our young women that it’s not OK to protect themselves!*** It is so hard for me to understand how any woman our age could send that message.... especially a woman in such a position as yourself. The person I am astonished and disappointed with is you, Cindy. You and you alone are responsible for the damage caused by this message. And when the granddaughter who “lights up the room” is raped and murdered by a man in a yellow dress in the ladies’ room, my message for you is, “Smile pep, she could have been a Dee Zee Girl.”

With regards,

Karen

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## Response from Cindy Menges, CEO of Delta Zeta

Hello ...,

Payton's advocacy for banning trans-athletes from sports *has nothing to do* with her membership in Delta Zeta. Payton is a national spokesperson who advocates to ban trans-athletes from women's sports. She was a guest of the President to be recognized for her advocacy, and the recent Executive Order which was an honor for her and well deserved. Delta Zeta Sorority *did not remove* Payton from membership for confronting a Western Carolina student in a women's restroom, regardless of what social media and the story presents.

Delta Zeta has been a strong advocate for women's-only organizations and opportunities since our founding in 1902, and that commitment remains today. Delta Zeta is *a women's-only* organization, and as such we remain committed to our mission of creating lifelong, values-based membership experiences *for women* that are anchored deeply in our six core values, including friendship and belonging. We do not engage in any politics, that is not our purpose.

We invest in the ongoing research, development and training of volunteer and collegiate leadership to assure the provision of resources, education, and housing *that support women's needs, health & wellness and safety*. And, we have a member accountability process *to uphold Delta Zeta values and safe practices*. As a private membership organization, we are committed to uphold the confidentiality and privacy *of any active or inactive member* and so we therefore do not make statements involving members *no matter how misleading the story/headline*.

Sincerely,

Cindy Menges

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