



ROMAN CATHOLIC
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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

To: Boy Scout
Coordination now.
Please make sure all of
spouse knows of
these things by

July 28, 2015

Dear Brother Bishops,

Two years ago I wrote to you concerning the decision of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to adjust its youth membership policy so that "no Scouting unit may deny a youth membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone." At that time, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) offered considerations to assist dioceses and Catholic chartered Scout units in understanding this change in BSA policy, which, if applied correctly, was not deemed to compromise Catholic teaching.

On Monday, July 27, the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America ratified a resolution stating that no adults can be denied registration as employees or non-unit-serving volunteers of the Boy Scouts of America "on the basis of sexual orientation." The resolution also affirms a chartered organization's right to select its unit leaders based on its religious principles, rejects any interference with that right, and provides that local Scout councils will not interfere with chartered organizations' rights in this regard. As chartering organizations, individual parishes, institutions and Catholic schools have always had this right.

It is not entirely clear how these rights will be squared with previous policy changes the BSA has made, or how they will work in practice, but it appears that the resolution respects the needs of Catholic chartering organizations in the right to choose leaders whose character and conduct are consistent with Catholic teaching. At the same time, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) expresses strong concern about the practical implications of this resolution, especially for our young people in Scouting, and whether the term "sexual orientation" will be correctly understood and applied only in reference to sexual inclination and not to sexual conduct or behavior. NCCS also expresses concern that the resolution articulates a position on adult sexual conduct that does not make clear that sexual behavior should be reserved to a husband and wife in marriage.

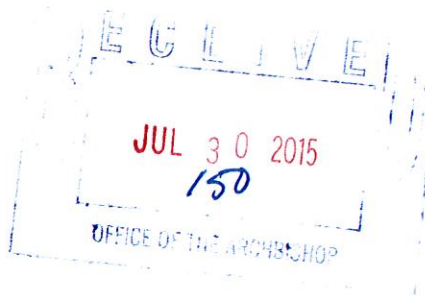
There certainly are differences in religious beliefs among various chartering organizations and society in general and these differences have played a part in the creation of this resolution. While these fluctuating situations will be increasingly challenging, there is still a strong need to recognize the vital importance of providing a Catholic emphasis to Catholic Scouts and Scouters seeking ways to live out their "duty to God." Just as we offer various kinds of parish based programs for youth, Scouting should be included as a viable youth ministry. Chartering Scout units under Catholic auspices will ensure that youth within Catholic faith communities are led by faith-filled role models who share the same interests in Scouting.

Our youth do not want to leave Scouting; it will be necessary to have a Catholic influence within the movement and Catholic chartered units will help to serve that need. I ask you to continue this important journey together and pray for the future of Scouting. Many thanks for all you do to promote Scouting as Catholic youth ministry. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have and be assured that I will share any new developments with you. Note that I have included a copy of the resolution itself and some frequently asked questions and answers provided by the Boy Scouts of America.

In the Lord's Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert E. Guglielmo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "G".

Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmo
Episcopal Liaison
National Catholic Committee on Scouting



RESOLUTION ON ADULT LEADERSHIP STANDARDS

WHEREAS, it is the mission of the Boy Scouts of America to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law:

Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

WHEREAS, the vision of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law;

WHEREAS, the values set forth in the Scout Oath and Scout Law are fundamental to the Boy Scouts of America and central to teaching young people to make better choices over their lifetimes;

WHEREAS, duty to God and duty to country are core values and immutable tenets of the Boy Scouts of America;

WHEREAS, the Scout Oath begins with the duty to God and the Scout Law ends with a Scout's obligation to be reverent, and Scouting respects and defends the rights of others to practice their own religious beliefs without criticism;

WHEREAS, the duty to country recognizes that America is made up of countless families and communities, and that we should all work hard to be good family members and good citizens by striving to make our country better, obeying its laws, and serving our communities;

WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America teaches youth members to be helpful, friendly, courteous, and kind to all and to respect those whose beliefs—in particular religious beliefs—differ from their own;

WHEREAS, for more than 105 years, programs of the Boy Scouts of America have been delivered to youth members through cooperation with chartered organizations that select adult volunteer leaders who meet the chartered organization's standards as well as the leadership standards of the Boy Scouts of America;

WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America believes it should allow members and parents to choose a Scouting unit, chartered to an organization with similar beliefs, that best meets the needs of their families;

WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America recognizes the sincere religious beliefs and freedoms of religious chartered organizations and will not require any religious chartered organization to act in ways inconsistent with that organization's mission, principles, or religious beliefs;

WHEREAS, Scouting is a youth program, and any sexual conduct, whether heterosexual or homosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting;

WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America has adopted membership standards to ensure that youth have the opportunity to join Scouting and to be served by qualified volunteer adult leaders selected by the chartered organization, all of whom are subject to the provisions of the Boy Scouts of America's Youth Protection requirements;

WHEREAS, notwithstanding any other provision of the Boy Scouts of America's Bylaws, no Scouting unit may deny a youth membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone;

WHEREAS, the current adult leadership standard of the Boy Scouts of America states:

The applicant must possess the moral, educational, and emotional qualities that the Boy Scouts of America deems necessary to afford positive leadership to youth. The applicant must also be the correct age, subscribe to the precepts of the Declaration of Religious Principle (duty to God), and abide by the Scout Oath and the Scout Law.

WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America's Declaration of Religious Principle states:

The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God. In the first part of the Scout Oath or Promise the member declares, "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law." The recognition of God as the ruling and leading power in the universe and the grateful acknowledgment of His favors and blessings are necessary to the best type of citizenship and are wholesome precepts in the education of the growing members. No matter what the religious faith of the members may be, this fundamental need of good citizenship should be kept before them. The Boy Scouts of America, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, but it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the home and the organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The standards for selecting adult leaders of the Boy Scouts of America are as follows:

Adult leadership positions in the Boy Scouts of America are open to adults who meet the requirements set forth in the Bylaws, the Rules and Regulations, and the policies of the Boy Scouts of America.

Adult leaders in the programs of the Boy Scouts of America must (a) subscribe to and abide by the values expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law, (b) subscribe to and abide by the precepts of the Declaration of Religious Principle, and (c) demonstrate at all times behavior that exemplifies the highest level of good conduct and respect for others and that is consistent with Scouting's values and codes of conduct.

No adult applicant for registration as an employee or non-unit-serving volunteer, who otherwise meets the requirements of the Boy Scouts of America, may be denied registration on the basis of sexual orientation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

The Boy Scouts of America hereby adopts the following statement on sexuality and adult leaders:

Matters of marriage, family, and sexuality raise profound social, moral, and theological questions. The Boy Scouts of America has always been deeply respectful of the religious and moral beliefs of its chartering organizations, including religious organizations.

The Boy Scouts of America affirms that sexual relations between adults should be moral, honorable, committed, and respectful. Adult Scout leaders should reflect these values in their personal and public lives so as to be proper role models for youth. The Boy Scouts of America affirms the right of each chartering organization to reach its own religious and moral conclusions about the specific meaning and application of these values. The Boy Scouts of America further affirms the right of each chartering organization to select adult leaders who support those conclusions in word and deed and who will best inculcate the organization's values through the Scouting program.

The Boy Scouts of America rejects any interference with or condemnation of the diverse beliefs of chartering organizations on matters of marriage, family, and sexuality. The message of Scouting is one of toleration and respect for different religious and moral conclusions in this matter, acknowledging that reasonable minds may honorably differ. Any effort to exclude or penalize chartering organizations based on their beliefs or policies regarding marriage, family, or sexuality is contrary to the Boy Scouts of America's commitment to religious freedom and respect for the beliefs and convictions of its chartered organizations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

No local council may refuse to process or approve a charter application or in any way limit the participation of a Scouting unit based upon the chartered organization's exercise of its right to select adult leaders as provided in this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

The Boy Scouts of America will defend and indemnify to the fullest extent allowed by law any bona fide religious chartered organization against any claim or action contending that the chartered organization's good faith refusal to select a unit leader based upon the religious principles of the chartered organization is in violation of the law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

This resolution shall be effective from the date of ratification by the National Executive Board.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
NATIONAL COUNCIL

June 29, 2015

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
REGARDING THE PROPOSED NEW ADULT LEADER STANDARD**

1. Are religious chartered organizations legally protected if they refuse to accept gay leaders?

Yes. See the Memorandum prepared by BSA's outside legal counsel on the constitutional rights of religious chartered organizations to select leaders in accordance with their religious principles.

2. Will the BSA continue to defend the right of religious chartered organizations to select their leaders and indemnify them against claims based upon their refusal to accept gay leaders?

Yes. Religious chartered organizations have always had the right to choose leaders aligned with the organizations' religious principles. That right is secured by the Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America, the chartered organization agreement, and the organizations' constitutional rights. The BSA will defend the right of bona fide religious chartered organizations – churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, or other places of worship – to select leaders based upon their religious principles and indemnify them against any claim filed against them on this basis. The BSA considers the right of its religious chartered organizations to utilize the Scouting program as part of their youth ministry an integral part of Scouting's ability to preserve duty to God.

3. What will the BSA do to limit discussions related to personal sexuality in Scouting?

The BSA already has training and policy guidance on the issue as well as a code of conduct for youth camp staff and all adult leaders. Advocacy on social and political causes inconsistent with the program is prohibited and may result in the revocation of registration. Adult leaders are trained to refer youth members to their parents or religious advisors to discuss any matters related to sexuality, and the BSA encourages religious leaders to counsel youth in the units they sponsor as part of their youth ministry. The BSA's youth protection program prohibits any leader from one-on-one contact with youth and requires two adult leaders on all outings and activities. Adult leaders are prohibited from engaging in any type of sexual activity while participating in any Scouting activity. These guidelines collectively serve to help monitor conduct

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and detect adult leaders who may attempt to engage in inappropriate conduct with youth.

4. What action will the BSA take if adult leaders engage in inappropriate conduct, such as public displays of affection with a member of the same sex, at Scouting activities?

First, in addition to the BSA code of conduct, units may establish limitations on the conduct of adult leaders. Units may remove an adult leader who refuses to abide by the unit's expectations. The BSA may remove from the program or a leadership position any adult leader who fails to demonstrate the emotional, educational, and moral qualities required of Scout leaders. Just as it has been in the past, inappropriate conduct by leaders of any type, whether heterosexual or homosexual, will not be tolerated. Conduct will continue to be monitored, and inappropriate conduct may serve as grounds for removal.

5. Will chartered organizations be able to refuse to accept gay Scouts in their units?

No. In 2013, the National Council adopted a resolution that prohibits youth from being denied membership merely because they express they are gay. That resolution will not be affected if the adult leader standard is changed.

6. How will the BSA enforce the code of conduct at multiple-unit events, such as camporees and summer camp?

The BSA has policies on the enforcement of membership and conduct standards, and it is the duty of every Scouter to take action if they see violations of youth protection or code of conduct standards. As is the case today, the council Scout executive will continue to be responsible for initiating action to revoke the membership of a youth or registration of an adult leader who violates youth protection or code of conduct policies. However, it is the obligation of every leader if they "see something to say something" by reporting inappropriate conduct.

7. Will there be additional training on acceptable conduct for adult leaders?

BSA training and council- and unit-level supplemental training already establish the expectations for leader conduct. Those trainings can and will be modified to deal with a variety of contemporary issues based upon experience so as to maintain the high standards of conduct the BSA has established for leaders, including changes in policy, bullying, and prohibited discrimination.



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8. Will non-religious chartered organizations be allowed to discriminate based on sexual orientation in connection with their selection of adult leaders?

No, non-religious organizations would not be allowed to reject an otherwise qualified adult leader based on sexual orientation.

9. Why is the BSA changing the adult leader standard to allow gay adult leaders at this time?

The national leadership of the BSA has concluded that the BSA's policy of excluding adult leaders based on their sexual orientation is no longer sustainable for a number of reasons, not the least of which is a rapidly changing societal and legal landscape. The BSA believes that changing the policy but continuing to acknowledge the longstanding right of religious chartered organizations to select leaders based upon their religious principles is the best choice for the BSA and its chartered organizations.