



***National Catholic Committee on Scouting  
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Dear Members of the NCCS, Catholic Scouters & Concerned Parents,

I want to thank all those who prayed, attended mass, sent e-mails, letters and phone calls in regards to the potential policy change by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) on allowing homosexuals in Scout leadership positions. I regret that I was not able to respond to each and every one of you. As I write this, I still have hundreds of unread e-mails. Of the correspondence I did read, they were well written and very passionate in support of one side or the other.

You should know that on February 4<sup>th</sup> the NCCS key leaders attended the Religious Relationship Task Force Meeting. At that meeting, the BSA Chief Scout Executive, National President and National Commissioner addressed those in attendance. Because of the media and rumors, the perception to most Scouters and concerned parents is that this policy change was due to caving in under pressure and selling out for corporate donations. As the BSA Key 3 explained to us, the reason for this proposed policy change was that their constitutional lawyers informed them that they would probably not win the next case on this issue and that the last case was a 5 to 4 decision, which could have gone the other way. They also informed us that by having this restriction, the BSA has usurped for many years the Chartered Organizations ability to select and approve their own leadership as they see fit and not as the BSA sees fit.

We also learned that the BSA started addressing this issue last year, but did not bring the major users of the program, faith-based organizations, in on this until a few weeks before the February National Meeting. It is true that BSA has been pressured for years by outside influences but there has been a growing pressure from within to make this change. Even the Task Force, which includes key leaders from the different faith-based organizations that charter Scout units, were divided on this issue. Some of the faith-based organizations would welcome this change. The Task Force did agree on a resolution to ask the BSA National Executive Board to allow more time for its membership to provide their issues and concerns to the BSA leadership before taking a vote on this issue.

Most of you should know by now that the BSA National Executive Board has postponed making a decision on this issue until the Annual BSA Meeting in May (22-24). The BSA leadership wants to gather more input from the Faith-Based Organizations, other chartering organizations, local Scout Councils and all those

who would like to have their voice heard. The BSA leadership will then present their recommendation to the voting members who attend the Annual Meeting for approval or disapproval.

This delay allows us to continue our efforts in ensuring that the issues and concerns of the NCCS are properly addressed and that your voice is properly represented. I am looking at changing part of the format for our Annual Meeting in April (11-14) to allow working groups to discuss this issue and make recommendations. This is such an important issue that it needs to be discussed in as much detail as possible.

Many have asked, how can they help or what can they do to make a difference. Here are some suggestions: continue praying on this issue and for us; continue letting your voice be heard at the NCCS, BSA Council & National levels; continue sending e-mails, letters and phone calls to the BSA National leadership and National Executive Board Members. Now that we know it will be up to the voting membership at the Annual BSA Meeting, get with your Council voting members, let them know your issues and concerns, and encourage them to attend the BSA National Meeting. Finally, come to the NCCS Annual Meeting and join in the decision making process so that the NCCS leadership can represent you to the best of our ability. Most of all, be civil in your dealings with those who disagree with your position on this issue.

Remember that we are in the Scouting program for the sake of our youth and that our needs and wants should be secondary. Remember that we should not punish the youth by not re-chartering or shutting down any Scout units, especially before a decision has been made. Remember that the youth in Scouting should not be used as pawns to be sacrificed by those for or against this policy to try and gain undue leverage in the decision making process. Remember that all Scout age youth should be encouraged to be part of this worthwhile program, so continue to recruit and grow our Catholic units and membership. Remember to let our Catholic faith be our conscience and our guide in all that we say and do. God Bless.

Yours in Catholic Scouting,



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