

Mr. Rick Pickering, Council President  
Mr. Kenneth C. Mehlhorn Scout Executive/CEO  
San Francisco Bay Area Council  
1001 Davis Street  
San Leandro, CA 94577

Dear Mr. Pickering and Mr. Mehlhorn:

I am writing to request that you stand with me to change the Boy Scouts of America's discriminatory membership policy that excludes leaders and members based on sexual orientation. The Boy Scouts of America is a model organization in many ways. BSA respects diverse religious beliefs; it makes a tremendous effort to reach out to disadvantaged youth; and it provides countless hours of service to communities across the country. The scouting program provides youth with opportunities to acquire leadership skills and confidence, to work together, to experience nature, and to develop a sense of community involvement and citizenship.

We are, however, extremely disappointed that the Boy Scouts of America has made sexual orientation a membership and leadership issue. This policy is intolerant and wrong, undercuts the tremendous good that scouting otherwise provides, and contradicts Scouting's own values. This policy increasingly costs Scouting community support, new members, access to publicly funded facilities, and corporate and private donations. For many Americans, including many former Scouts and community members who once viewed the organization in a positive light, this policy dramatically tarnishes the perception of the Boy Scouts. This policy also discounts the important Youth Protection program, summarily discouraging young, potentially gay scouts from reporting teasing, bullying or harassment for fear of being found out and dismissed from the organization.

We ask that you and the Executive Board of the Council take a stand with us and adopt a resolution similar to that passed by the Mount Diablo Silverado Council on March 16, 2013.

- A. Scouts and Scouters should be judged by their conduct, their actions, and their character, consistent with the Scout Oath and Scout Law, not by stereotypes or group related prejudices.
- B. The Scout Oath and the Scout Law are foundational ideas that every person should be exposed to so that all people can benefit from the Scouting movement's principles, ideals, and values.
- C. Regardless of sexual orientation, sexual topics and conduct, which include pointing out another individual's sexual orientation, are not part of the Scouting movement and should not be tolerated. Further, the Scouting movement should not permit its organization to be used as a vehicle to promote any personal, political, social or other objective that is inconsistent with the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- D. The support from our volunteers and our community has reaffirmed the role that the Scouting Movement has had and can continue to have in shaping the lives and values of young people. However the current BSA membership policy clearly excludes an entire group based on a presumption of behavior rather than on the actions of individuals. Excluding an entire group of people based on stereotypes and prejudices is inconsistent with the Scout Oath and Scout Law. The current membership policy is of deep concern to many in our Council for its potential to undermine the future vitality of the Scouting movement.
- E. Chartered Organizations have always and will continue to create Scouting Units that are consistent with their organizational faiths, standards and deeply held beliefs. However, we believe that the national BSA board should not pass this important decision from BSA's governing body to Chartered Organizations. Rather, we believe that the national board should adopt a standard policy, consistent with the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and the principles documented within this report, which ends the isolation and exclusion of LGBT individuals.

We believe that the council executive board should vote to support these Membership Standard Principles. Further, we believe our board should vote to advocate for these principles. Finally we believe our board should vote to encourage our national board representatives to vote in a manner consistent with these principles.

Sincerely,