

January 8, 2013

Mr. John Fenoglio, Scout Executive/CEO
Mr. Lou Paulson, Council Board President
Mount Diablo-Silverado Council
Boy Scouts of America
800 Ellinwood Way
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Dear Messrs. Fenoglio and Paulson,

I am an Eagle Scout from Troop 212 (and a Webelos/Arrow of Light from Pack 55). I treasured my experience with Boy Scouts. I always wanted to continue to give back to Scouting, but wrote to the Boy Scouts many years ago telling them I would not be a leader so long as the Boy Scouts discriminated.

My son joined Cub Scouts this year, with some hesitation on my part. I am writing to you now to request that you support a change to 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. Along with other parents in our pack (and other scouts I know), I support the BSA in many capacities, and feel that my son has benefitted, and will continue to benefit greatly from the many positive qualities of this organization.

It saddens me that some of my son's best friends cannot join Cub Scouts—not because of their sexual orientation (they of course have none)—but because their families will not join a discriminatory organization. As I said, I have serious misgivings myself.

I am 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.

Society's values have changed, and discrimination of this kind is not tolerable in our community. I see no reason to continue this outdated, discriminatory policy. I ask that you and the Mount Diablo Silverado Council (MDSC) take a stand and adopt an independent rule to allow each local pack, troop, or unit to determine whether or not to implement their own inclusionary membership policy. I hope this policy will be adopted by the BSA national level as well. I request that you formally communicate my views to the National Council, and join together with peers from like-minded Councils and work with the National BSA to end this damaging, discriminatory policy.

I agree with the National BSA that scouting is not about, and should not be about sex (that is their stated reason for the "don't tell" policy)—but this is nonsensical because then scouts and leaders should be excluded if they "tell" about their heterosexual preferences. The absurdity of this conclusion demonstrates the fallacy in the policy.

Scouting has always been focused on providing a strong scouting program of outdoor activities, community service, leadership, brotherhood, independence and growth for boys. I believe the organization should welcome any boy willing to try to live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law—there is nothing in either about sexual orientation, nor should there be. I believe that BSA's policies should neither condone nor encourage discrimination.

I look forward to creating positive change in collaboration with the MDSC, its Board and BSA National Board.

Very Truly Yours,
Charles Patterson
51 Donna Maria Way
Orinda, CA 94563!