

UCC Pastors for Full Inclusion
c/o Rev. Dr. Frederick W. Weidmann
Hillcrest Congregational Church UCC
404 Gregory Lane
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

December 17, 2012

Wayne Brock, Chief Scout Executive
Boy Scouts of America
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane
PO Box 152079
Irving, TX 75015-2079

Dear Mr. Brock:

As religious leaders, we thank you and all associated with Boys Scouts of America for the positive contributions you have made to the youth and the future leadership of our nation and world.

We also strongly protest the very negative contribution that your actions and the actions of the National Office of the Boy Scouts of America are making 1) by contributing to the denial of the rank of Eagle Scout to Ryan Andresen of Troop 212 in Moraga, California and his expulsion from the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of his sexual orientation; and 2) by promoting the denial of the human dignity and the leadership potential of thousands upon thousands of potential scouts and scout leaders, given your reaffirmation of BSA's discriminatory anti-gay policy. These are not matters of mere opinions or disagreements; these are matters relevant to the very core of what it means to be human and what it means to contribute to the development of human beings and to humanity as a whole.

So many of us, along with our churches, within the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ have proudly supported and promoted Scouting for decades. We are proud of our kids and proud of so much that they, and our troops, have accomplished and stood for. But we are no longer proud, at all, of BSA National. We are disgusted and astounded at your willingness to write off thousands upon thousands of youth and adult leaders who could and would gain so much from being involved in Scouts *and* who could and would contribute so much to Scouting.

When Deron Smith, your spokesman, says that BSA is not pursuing an agenda or making "social commentary" but rather is choosing to defer to what it senses are the wishes of most Scouting parents, as religious and community leaders we are left wondering, and questioning, both the validity and the wisdom of that stated position. "The vast majority of parents Scouting serves value their right to address issues of sex and sexual orientation within their family," Smith said in a recent email. "They do not sign their children up for Scouting to expose them to this topic." Really? Do those same parents keep their children from engaging with individuals and programs

at so many schools, civic organizations, and private corporations all or most of which—often mandated by law—recognize that sexual orientation has no impact on the leadership potential of ANY citizen or resident of these United States? And if so—if indeed those Scouting parents identified by your spokesman do actively block their kids from open engagement with so many institutions and individuals in these United States—then what does that say about those parents’ notions of leadership? And what does it say about the BSA if it accepts and promotes such narrow and limited notions of leadership?

Leaders lead, and the best leaders recognize the dignity and worth of all people. We would expect the Boy Scouts to know that, and to model it.

As Christian leaders who promote an Open and Affirming policy toward all of God’s children—that is, as church leaders who say “All are Welcome” and really mean that ALL ARE WELCOME—we expect the same from any organization that we promote and/or sponsor. Further, as ones familiar with scouting and its proud and developing history we are aware of important steps that Scouting has made to do the right thing: for example, banning racial discrimination (1974) and opening up troop leadership to women (1988).

For reasons of simple human morality and decency, for the real and worthwhile development of effective leadership, and for the good of Scouting and of our whole society, we call on Boy Scouts of America to change its policy. And we look forward to supporting BSA in and through that very positive and constructive change. We expect the Boy Scouts to serve, and to be served and enriched by, all boys and all potential adult leaders.

We look forward to hearing from you and to supporting your move to inclusion. Thank you.

Blessings,

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