

Date: May 7, 2013

To: Mr. Charles Gibbons, Scout Executive of the Alameda Council

From: Rev. Laura Rose, Senior Pastor,
First Congregational Church of Alameda, United Church of Christ

Dear Mr. Gibbons,

As you may know, I have also been a vocal advocate for the LGBT community in my role as pastor of First Congregational Alameda (United Church of Christ) and as a private citizen and parent. As a Christian pastor, my faith calls me to work for the inclusion and equal treatment of all people. In addition, I am one of hundreds of parents in Alameda who have not, and will not, enroll their young sons in a Boy Scout Troop that does not allow gay youth and gay adults to be open and honest about their sexual orientation.

I understand that the Alameda Council will be meeting on May 15 to discuss how it will vote in regard to the Boy Scouts of America decision to change its national policy and permit the inclusion of openly gay scouts. I would like to applaud the BSA for taking this step and ask that the local Alameda Council vote in affirmation of this change in policy for its local troops.

Not only does the BSA change of policy serve to affirm some of the core values of scouting -- honesty, integrity and self-esteem, it will go a long way in preventing the kind of internalized shame that gay youth must endure when faced with the decision to remain "in the closet" or risk losing the friendship and sense of community that they enjoy as scouts.

In addition to affirming this policy change, I would also ask the Alameda Council to consider taking a public stand for the full inclusion of gay or lesbian scout leaders. As leaders, they should be given the freedom to model the values of honesty, integrity and self-esteem for the youth they lead.

As the parent of a 5 year-old-boy, the Alameda Council's public position on the full inclusion of openly gay youth and scout masters will be a critical factor in whether our family and hundreds of others will participate in the Boy Scouts in Alameda. Thank you in advance for taking time to consider your response to this important issue of inclusion in our community.

Sincerely,

Rev. Laura Rose
Senior Pastor
First Congregational Church Alameda
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