

TROOP 234

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

MORAGA, CALIFORNIA



Mr. Lou Paulson
Council President
Mt. Diablo Silverado Council
800 Ellinwood Way
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

November 15, 2012

Dear Mr. Paulson:

At our November 8th 2012 Troop 234 Committee meeting we discussed the issues of sexual orientation raised by the recent case of Moraga Scout Ryan Andresen. This case has both demonstrated and highlighted to us that serious risk and deficiencies exist in the BSA youth protection program and BSA's membership policy.

Accordingly this Committee, in step with many other local troops and packs, passed the attached resolution that clarifies Troop 234's non-discriminatory position, seeks to change Council and BSA policy, and encourages further communication on the issues.

Troop 234 strives to do its very best to conduct its Scouting program according to the policies and guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America. We are very careful to promote only Scouting and life skills, and the principles of Scouting. Accordingly, Troop 234 rejects all forms of unjust discrimination, harassment, or abuse.

We are dedicated to safeguarding our Scouts and our adult leaders from discrimination and bullying, strengthening our youth protection wherever needed, and eliminating arbitrary, inconsistent, and subjective policy enforcement.

In our view, when there is an institutional policy that allows a Scout or adult leader to be discriminated against on the basis of his sexual orientation, religious beliefs or, for that matter, any other basis, that person cannot turn to other Scouts or adult leaders for needed protection or intervention. This vulnerability opens the door to unchecked harassment, hazing, and abuse, and creates opportunities for arbitrary and subjective policy enforcement.

We also believe this discriminatory policy provides a significant and unacceptable risk related to sexual abuse and its reporting. Sexual predators may use these policies against Scouts, seeing the policies as providing opportunity and/or convincing Scouts that they will be expelled from Scouting for reporting abuse.

Allowing such a situation to continue, once recognized, is not protecting our youth, and in our opinion would be negligent within our Troop and within Scouting as a whole. We have no intention to discriminate in any way, but we now see that a well-prepared official BSA non-discrimination policy is needed as well.

We are pleased to find on the National BSA website a Diversity page, which states "Scouting fosters the spirit of diversity and inclusiveness among its youth members and adult volunteers, as well as among national and local council employees." We trust that the Mt Diablo-Silverado Council will recognize that BSA policy on sexual orientation needs to be updated to be consistent with this statement.

A fair, just, and safe environment for all our Scouts is our paramount goal. It is in this spirit that the Troop 234 Committee has taken these actions. If you have any questions or concerns whatsoever, please do not hesitate to contact the Troop Committee Chairman, the Scoutmaster, or the Charter Organization Representative.

Yours in Scouting,
Troop 234

Daniel Smith
Chairman

Wendell Baker
Scoutmaster

Russell Stepp
Charter Organization Representative

Links to supporting documents:

[Resolution of 8Nov12](#)

[4-points document](#)

[Inclusionary policy](#)

[Policy clarification letter](#)