



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on April 23, 2013

Boy Scouts Propose Dropping Ban on Gay-Identifying Youth

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) announced April 19 that it is considering a proposal that would partially lift its long-time ban on openly homosexual participants, by allowing youth who self-identify as gay to become Boy Scouts, while continuing to bar homosexual Scout leaders. The estimated 1,400 voting members of the BSA's National Council will decide on the proposed policy change during the week of May 20 at a national meeting in Texas, the organization said.



The relevant portion of the [BSA proposal](#), which has already been approved by the group's executive committee, declares that no youth "may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone." [Baptist Press News](#) noted that the latest policy proposal "differs significantly from a proposal that was discussed in February that would have allowed openly gay leaders and youth to join. That policy would have made it a 'local option,' whereby each sponsoring organization would decide the policy. Under the new proposal, there is a national standard and no local option."

In July 2012, following a two-year, closed-door review, the [BSA announced](#) that it would continue with its nearly century-old policy of excluding homosexuals both from leadership and membership in its ranks. That decision, along with the high-profile ouster of at least one openly homosexual Scout leader, prompted an [aggressive campaign](#) by homosexual activists to force the BSA to change its position, with a number of long-time [corporate sponsors](#) announcing they would pull their funding of the Boy Scouts. With a continuing barrage of criticism and pressure from homosexual activists and their supporters, the resolve that prompted the BSA leadership to affirm the policy against homosexuality has slipped over the past several months.

Curiously, the resolution for the policy change continues to affirm the mission of the BSA to help boys understand and embrace their duty to be "morally straight." The resolution notes that "the values set forth in the Scout Oath and Law are fundamental to the BSA and central to teaching young people to make better choices over their lifetimes." It also emphasizes that "any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting."

However, while insisting that the BSA "does not have an agenda on the matter of sexual orientation, and resolving this complex issue is not the role of the organization," the resolution goes on to observe that "youth are still developing, learning about themselves and who they are, developing their sense of right and wrong, and understanding their duty to God to live a moral life."

While past generations of Scout leaders understood these growing phases as opportunities to offer solid moral guidance to boys on the cusp of manhood, the policy change would effectively dispose of such notions — along with the 100-year policy underpinning them — and begin the incremental normalization of homosexuality in the Scouting program.



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Interestingly the BSA's own survey of past and present Boy Scout participants, leaders, and parents on the proposed new policy appears to show little support for the change. Among the findings:

- While a majority of 16- to 18-year-olds currently involved in Scouting oppose the longtime current policy excluding homosexuals, 61 percent of adult Scout members favor keeping current policy, with only 34 percent opposing it.
- 61 percent of Boy Scout parents support the current policy, along with 50 percent of parents of Cub Scouts.
- While 51 percent of the BSA's major donors support the current policy (compared to 33 percent who oppose it), a majority of Fortune 500 companies — which have supplied a steady stream of Boy Scout funding for years — would like to see the organizations open to both homosexual leaders and members.

Predictably, most vocal homosexual groups criticized the proposal as not going far enough in normalizing homosexuality in the organization by lifting the ban on gay Scout leaders. "Yet again the Boy Scouts of America has failed its members, corporate sponsors, donors, and the millions of Americans who agree that the time to end discrimination in Scouting is now," said Rich Ferraro of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). "By refusing to consider an end to its ban on gay and lesbian parents, the Boy Scouts have missed an opportunity to exercise leadership and usher the organization back to relevancy."

Chad Griffin of the Human Rights Campaign called the proposed policy change "good news," but complained that the BSA is not compromising its standards enough for the homosexual lobby. "Parents and adults of good moral character, regardless of sexual orientation, should be able to volunteer their time to mentor the next generation of Americans," he insisted.

Just as predictably, pro-family and religious leaders criticized the proposal, insisting that the BSA was caving in on moral values crucial to mentoring young men. Tony Perkins of the [Family Research Council](#) noted that the proposed policy "requires all Scouting families and faith-based organizations that object to homosexuality on religious grounds to affirm its moral validity. It introduces open and overt sexuality into an organization that is designed to foster character and leadership, thereby clouding Scouting's most fundamental purposes."

Perkins pointed out that the "stated mission and message of the Boy Scouts is clear, and changing their policies to appease one group will only encourage other special interest groups to demand that the Scouts make more changes to please them. An atheist leader has already declared that if the policy on homosexuality changes, then there is no reason why atheists should not also have their way and remove God from the Scout oath and the term 'reverence' from the Scout law."

Referring to the BSA's century-plus tradition of moral excellence, David Cortman of [Alliance Defending Freedom](#) warned that the proposal represented "the beginning of a sea change, as those promoting this agenda won't rest until there is complete acceptance of any sexual preference for both leaders and members." Cortman counseled the Boy Scouts to recall "that the Constitution protects — and the [Supreme Court has affirmed](#) — their freedom to promote and practice the values that have served to shape our nation's boys into leaders for well over 100 years."

Photo of Boy Scouts: AP Images



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