

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **What is the policy change?**
Effective immediately, chartered organizations will be able to select adult volunteer leaders without regard to sexual orientation, continuing Scouting's longstanding policy of chartered organizations selecting their leaders. This change allows Scouting's members and parents to select local units, chartered to organizations with similar beliefs, that best meet the needs of their families. This change also respects the right of religious chartered organizations to choose adult volunteer leaders whose beliefs are consistent with their own. The 2013 youth membership policy is not affected and remains unchanged.
- **How and when did the vote take place?**
The National Executive Board met to ratify this resolution during a special conference call on Monday, July 27.
- **When will this change take effect?**
The change is effective immediately.
- **Who makes up the National Executive Board and Executive Committee?**
The National Executive Board is the governing body of the National Council. The board is composed of elected members, regional presidents, and appointed youth members, and is led by the national president. There are 71 members of the National Executive Board and 17 Executive Committee members.
- **What were the specific results of the vote?**
Of those present and voting, 79 percent voted in favor of the resolution.
- **Why doesn't the entire membership get to vote?**
Under the BSA's national bylaws, decisions of this nature are the responsibility of the Executive Committee and National Executive Board. This action is in full accordance with the bylaws of the BSA.
- **Why did the BSA make this change now?**
Due to the social, political, and legal changes taking place in our country and in our movement, the current adult leadership policy cannot be sustained. The best way to allow the BSA to continue to focus on its mission and preserve its core values is to address the issue and set its own course to ensure it continues to provide life-changing experiences to youth they cannot get anywhere else.

- How did you reach this decision? What was the process?**
 During the 2015 Boy Scouts of America National Annual Meeting in May, Dr. Gates encouraged the Scouting family to reflect on the challenges, primarily regarding adult leadership standards, facing the BSA and potential alternatives for addressing them. Based on these remarks, the BSA National Executive Board voted to ratify a resolution amending the adult leadership standards policy. The National Executive Committee recommended the resolution for ratification earlier this month.
- Why does this change make sense for the organization?**
 Effective immediately, chartered organizations will be able to select adult volunteer leaders without regard to sexual orientation, continuing Scouting's longstanding policy of chartered organizations selecting their leaders. This change allows Scouting's members and parents to select local units, chartered to organizations with similar beliefs, that best meet the needs of their families. This change also respects the right of religious chartered organizations to choose adult volunteer leaders whose beliefs are consistent with their own.
- Will my religious organization have to allow gay leaders?**
 Religious chartered organizations may continue to use religious beliefs as criteria for selecting adult leaders, including matters of sexuality.
- Will the Boy Scouts of America indemnify both religiously affiliated chartered organizations and civic- based chartered organizations?**
 The BSA will continue to legally defend—or indemnify—the rights of its religious chartered organizations to choose leaders whose beliefs are consistent with their own.
- What does it specifically mean to indemnify religious chartered organizations?**
 The adopted policy allows religious chartered organizations to use religious beliefs as criteria for selecting adult leaders. The BSA will defend and protect from loss religious chartered organizations that select their leaders based on good-faith religious beliefs.
- Will the BSA inform parents, youth members, or adult leaders if a leader in their unit is gay?**
 These issues should not be discussed in a Scouting context. Scouts will be directed to their religious leaders or parents to seek guidance on these matters. Leaders who violate the behavioral standards of the BSA by discussing these issues can be removed from Scouting.
- How does this change affect non-religious chartered organizations?**
 As they always have, chartered organizations will select their leaders and can require adult leaders to demonstrate behavior that exemplifies the highest level of good conduct and respect for others. Only religious chartered organizations may use religious beliefs as criteria for selecting adult leaders, including matters of sexuality.

- **Has the BSA received word from any chartered organizations that they will withdraw their support as a result of this policy change? Do you expect membership to be affected?**

We are grateful for the continued support of our chartered organizations. While we would be disappointed with anything that limits our ability to serve more youth, our focus remains on the goals that unite us, as we work to accomplish incredible things for young people and the communities we serve.

- **Following this change, what have you heard from those who now wish to be involved in Scouting?**

We are grateful for the continued support of our Scouting family, and we welcome our members and parents to select local units, chartered to organizations with similar beliefs, that best meet the needs of their families. Nationally, Scouting represents approximately 2.4 million youth members and nearly 1 million adult leaders with diverse beliefs. By focusing on the goals that unite us, we are able to accomplish incredible things for young people and the communities we serve.

- **How are members, leaders, and chartered organizations reacting to this change?**

Scouting teaches its youth members and adult leaders to be tolerant and respectful of different religious and moral beliefs, acknowledging that reasonable minds may honorably differ. Moving forward, Scouting will continue to focus on reaching and serving youth, helping them grow into good, strong citizens. By focusing on the goals that unite us, we are able to accomplish incredible things for young people and the communities we serve.

- **Is this the result of recent lawsuits or pressure from activists and sponsors? Is it the result of the recent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court on equal marriage and states' rights?**

Due to the social, political, and legal changes taking place in our country and in our movement, the current adult leadership policy cannot be sustained. The best way to allow the BSA to continue to focus on its mission and preserve its core values is to address the issue and set its own course to ensure it continues to provide life-changing experiences to youth they cannot get anywhere else.

- **Can gay leaders who were previously removed rejoin the organization?**

Adult leaders who were previously unable to serve in Scouting may apply for volunteer leadership positions and will be eligible for selection if otherwise qualified, regardless of sexual orientation or preference.

- **Does this policy change apply to BSA employees?**

BSA employees may not be discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation, and we will continue to follow all local, state, and federal employment laws. For all staff positions that require BSA membership, we will consider all qualified and eligible persons for hire without regard to their sexual orientation.

- **What will happen to local councils that have passed non-discrimination policies that do not align with this new national policy?**

This resolution prohibits local councils from denying a charter to a unit that is following the beliefs of its religious chartered organization. The National Council will take action on a council that violates this provision.

- **Will you consider changing the “duty to God” standard?**

Duty to God and duty to country, as expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law, are the fundamental tenets of Scouting and always have been. It remains the position of the BSA that these ideals and principles are central to teaching young people to make better choices over their lifetimes.

- **Can a gay adult be a Scoutmaster or unit leader?**

Yes. If selected by the chartered organization, an otherwise qualified and eligible gay adult is eligible to serve as a unit leader.

- **How will you handle logistics like sleeping arrangements and public displays of affection?**

As it always has, the BSA will be guided by behavioral standards. Sexual issues should not be discussed in a Scouting context. Leaders who violate these rules will be removed from Scouting.

- **What if an adult volunteer leader or a unit doesn’t agree with this proposed change?**

As a voluntary, private organization, the BSA sets policies that are best for the organization. All adult leaders and local units agree to follow the BSA’s national policies and comply with the behavioral standards of the BSA.

- **Whom do I contact for clarification or additional questions?**

Questions and comments should be directed to feedback@scouting.org.