

## Membership Standards Statements

The following are excerpts from statements about the recent change in membership standards. The full text of these documents is also included. Additional statements will be shared as they become available.

### **National Jewish Committee on Scouting**

“The time has come for us to renew our ties with those organizations that have previously been reluctant to participate in Scouting. The prospect for forming new units has never been greater.”

*Bruce Chudacoff, Chairman  
National Jewish Committee on Scouting*

### **National Catholic Committee on Scouting**

“The National Catholic Committee on Scouting recognizes that differences in religious beliefs among chartered organizations and society in general have played a part in the creation of this resolution. While this fluctuating situation will be increasingly challenging, we recognize the vital importance of providing a Catholic emphasis to Catholic Scouts and Scouters seeking ways to live out their “duty to God”. We also recognize the increasing need for the Catholic Church to offer Scouting as a program of youth ministry. Chartering Scout units will ensure that youth within their faith communities are led by faith-filled role models who share the same interests in Scouting.

If you are like us, you joined Scouting to make a difference in the lives of others. Our youth don't want to leave Scouting. Catholic Scouters like you are still very much needed. Let's continue this important journey together and pray for the future of Scouting!”

*Edward P. Martin Fr. National Chairman  
Michael P. Hanifin, National Chaplain*

### **General Commission on United Methodist Men**

“We recognize that existing standards for adult leaders are still the foundation of scouting including the adherence to the Scout Oath and Scout Law, the Declaration of Religious Principle, and the highest level of good conduct consistent with scouting's “codes of conduct.”

The new policy will not change the process for selecting Scout leaders. The decision of who will lead a unit (Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, or Venturing crew) chartered by a United Methodist Church still resides with the local church. Local churches will continue to select and approve Scout leaders based on the church's Christian convictions and the evaluation of the character and skills of potential Scout leaders.”

*Gilbert C. Hanke, General Secretary/CEO, GCUMM*

## Statements from Religious Organizations

### Association of Baptists for Scouting

- Even with this change, we continue to believe that the program made available by the BSA constitutes one of the most effective youth character development programs in existence. We emphatically believe that it continues to have the potential to be a powerful community outreach, evangelism, and ministry tool for any church, particularly in reaching families who currently have no religious or church affiliation.
- We believe that youth who are struggling with their own sexual identity are as much in need of character development programs such as Scouting as any other young person, and that Baptist congregations can and should be part of filling that need as an outreach and ministry program of their church.
- We urge Baptist churches to start or continue Scouting programs, and to have them led by adults who are faithful to the moral beliefs of that congregation, thereby aiding in the spiritual development of our youth. We believe conditions resulting in this policy change by the BSA provide clear evidence of the increasing need for current and future moral champions in our society.
- We encourage all Baptists in Scouting, both those in Baptist church chartered units and those in other units, to be a Christian witness within this mission field and to sustain their voice in Scouting at the local and national levels.

*Affirmed by T. S. Spangenberg, Jr., President, A.B.S.  
Merri Bolen, Secretary, A.B.S.*



# National Catholic Committee on Scouting

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July 27, 2015

Catholic Scouters,

On Monday, July 27, the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America ratified a resolution stating that no adults can be denied registration as employees or non-unit-serving volunteers of the Boy Scouts of America "on the basis of sexual orientation". The resolution also affirms the chartered organization's right to select its unit leaders based on its religious principles, rejects any interference with that right, and provides that local Scout councils will not interfere with chartered organizations' rights in this regard.

It is not entirely clear how these rights will be squared with previous policy changes the Boy Scouts have made, or how they will work in practice, but it appears that the resolution respects the needs of Catholic-chartered organizations in the right to choose leaders whose character and conduct are consistent with those of Catholic teaching. At the same time, we express strong concern about the practical implications of this resolution, especially for our young people in Scouting, and whether the term "sexual orientation" will be correctly understood and applied only in reference to sexual inclination and not to sexual conduct or behavior. We also express concern that the resolution articulates a position on adult sexual conduct that does not make clear that sexual behavior should be reserved to a husband and a wife in marriage. The concerns here also join the previous considerations communicated about the change in membership standards (see FAQs at [www.nccs-bsa.org/mbrstd/](http://www.nccs-bsa.org/mbrstd/), including FAQ #23 which pertains to BSA adult membership).

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting recognizes that differences in religious beliefs among chartered organizations and society in general have played a part in the creation of this resolution. While this fluctuating situation will be increasingly challenging, we recognize the vital importance of providing a Catholic emphasis to Catholic Scouts and Scouters seeking ways to live out their "duty to God". We also recognize the increasing need for the Catholic Church to offer Scouting as a program of youth ministry. Chartering Scout units will ensure that youth within their faith communities are led by faith-filled role models who share the same interests in Scouting.

If you are like us, you joined Scouting to make a difference in the lives of others. Our youth don't want to leave Scouting. Catholic Scouters like you are still very much needed. Let's continue this important journey together and pray for the future of Scouting! Thank you for all you do to promote Scouting as Catholic youth ministry! We will keep you updated as further information becomes available.

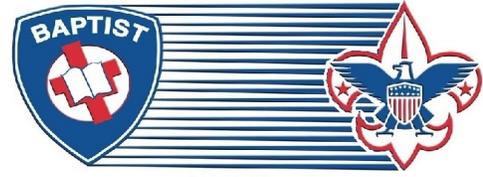
Yours in Catholic Scouting,

Edward P. Martin  
National Chairman (2013-2016)

Fr. Michael P. Hanifin  
National Chaplain (2013-2016)

July 27, 2015

Statement in Response To the Action of the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America to Change its Adult Membership Standards to Eliminate Any Restrictions With Respect to Sexual Orientation.



1. As Baptists, we embrace the Bible as our guidebook to living a Godly life. We believe that homosexual relationships are contradictory to Biblical teachings.
2. With respect to adult leaders in Scouting, we deeply regret the cultural shifts and the legal landscape that have forced the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to make the move to no longer have an adult leader standard related to sexual orientation.
3. We take comfort in the fact that churches who charter a Boy Scout unit will continue to “own” their units and have the ability and obligation to select their own adult leaders based on the moral tenets and beliefs of their congregations.
4. We appreciate that the BSA is firmly committed to protecting and enhancing one's “Duty to God” as a core value and program element, while regretting that it was felt that it was necessary to change the adult standard in order to protect that core value. We are pleased that the code of conduct within Scouting has not changed in any way, neither now nor in recent years.
5. Even with this change, we continue to believe that the program made available by the BSA constitutes one of the most effective youth character development programs in existence. We emphatically believe that it continues to have the potential to be a powerful community outreach, evangelism, and ministry tool for any church, particularly in reaching families who currently have no religious or church affiliation.
6. We believe that youth who are struggling with their own sexual identity are as much in need of character development programs such as Scouting as any other young person, and that Baptist congregations can and should be part of filling that need as an outreach and ministry program of their church.
7. We urge Baptist churches to start or continue Scouting programs, and to have them led by adults who are faithful to the moral beliefs of that congregation, thereby aiding in the spiritual development of our youth. We believe conditions resulting in this policy change by the BSA provide clear evidence of the increasing need for current and future moral champions in our society.
8. We urge families who are searching out a place for their child to enjoy the benefits of Boy Scouting to give strongest consideration to those Scout units which are chartered to a church or other entity having beliefs and conduct which are consistent with their own personal beliefs.
9. Faith affiliation statistics from National Scout Jamborees confirm that there are tens of thousands of Baptist youth Scouts and adult Scouters in units not chartered to Baptist churches. We encourage them to continue to be “salt and light” in their units and we urge all Baptists to be supportive of their efforts.
10. We encourage all Baptists in Scouting, both those in Baptist church chartered units and those in other units, to be a Christian witness within this mission field and to sustain their voice in Scouting at the local and national levels.

July 28, 2015



## **Statement by the General Secretary of the General Commission on United Methodist Men (GCUMM) related to the recent adult membership policy shift by the Boy Scouts of America**

On July 27, the Board of Directors of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) changed its adult membership standards. According to the resolution, “No adult applicant for registration as an employee or non-unit-serving volunteer, who otherwise meets the requirements of the Boy Scouts of America, may be denied registration on the basis of sexual orientation.” Previously, the same policy applied to all youth members as a result of a policy change in 2013.

We recognize that existing standards for adult leaders are still the foundation of scouting including the adherence to the Scout Oath and Scout Law, the Declaration of Religious Principle, and the highest level of good conduct consistent with scouting’s “codes of conduct.”

The new policy will not change the process for selecting Scout leaders. The decision of who will lead a unit (Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, or Venturing crew) chartered by a United Methodist Church still resides with the local church. Local churches will continue to select and approve Scout leaders based on the church’s Christian convictions and the evaluation of the character and skills of potential Scout leaders.

No church will be required to accept any volunteer as a Scout leader simply because of the new policy.

As part of the current charter agreement, the local church is protected by general liability insurance for its board, officers, and volunteers related to authorized scouting activities. As related in the resolution:

*“The Boy Scouts of America will defend and indemnify to the fullest extent allowed by law any bona fide religious chartered organization against any claim or action contending that the chartered organization’s good faith refusal to select a unit leader based upon the religious principles of the chartered organization is in violation of the law.”*

All Scout volunteers, regardless of their sexual orientation, are required to take and follow principles of the BSA Youth Protection Training. Any Scout leader found in violation of any of these principles is subject to immediate dismissal.

Within the current annual charter agreement signed by a local church and a local BSA council, the BSA agrees to fulfill an array of duties including, training Scout leaders, providing program resources, developing professional and support services, providing youth-protection training and conducting criminal background checks on leaders.

The Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting, GCUMM, has enjoyed partnerships with four civic youth agencies for many years, including the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, Camp Fire and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

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The primary reason for these partnerships is our commitment to ministering to the children and youth of our church communities, including at-risk youth.

Additional comments may come from the Board of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, after they meet August 20-22, 2015.

Gilbert C. Hanke, General Secretary/CEO, GCUMM

## **National Jewish Committee on Scouting**

*Email from Bruce Chudacoff, Chairman*

**From:** BRUCE CHUDACOFF  
**Sent:** Monday, July 27, 2015 6:52 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Important Information on Adult Leadership Policy Change

I am delighted to forward the announcement on our new leadership standards to you. You may read the remarks of Dr. Gates which indicate that as of this moment there are no restrictions on members and leaders in the BSA due to sexual orientation. This change in our standards of leadership does not prohibit a religious chartered organization from exercising its own religious beliefs in determining its leaders but that is the only exception to the new policy.

The time has come for us to renew our ties with those organizations that have previously been reluctant to participate in Scouting. The prospect for forming new units has never been greater. We need to keep in mind however that we want to form new but sustainable units. We have added a contact point entitled "New Units" to our website at [www.Jewishscouting.org](http://www.Jewishscouting.org). Please do not attempt to start a new unit without contacting our committee to tell us about your plans. The first step is to review all the information on the "New Units" part of our website. In it there are welcoming messages for prospective chartered organizations and specific information and supporting documents for Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts and most important, sections on "Creating Sustainable Units" and "BSA Support Literature." Take a look at the *Unit Performance Guide* to find out the best ways to start units. Let's get to work!

**BRUCE CHUDACOFF**

Chairman  
National Jewish Committee on Scouting  
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