

Dear Friends,

For more than a century, the Boy Scouts of America have been giving young people the opportunity to develop the skills they need to take responsibility and make their own decisions about important issues.

The topic of sexual orientation has been a high profile issue in our country over the past several decades and the BSA has often been a focal point of this ongoing national discussion. As we have always stated, the BSA does not have an agenda on the matter and resolving this complex issue is not the role of the organization. Scouting represents more than 2.6 million youth and one million adult members, across the nation, all with diverse beliefs and no single national Scouting policy can accommodate everyone's views or resolve this debate. The recent review of the organization's long-standing membership policy created an outpouring of feedback from the Scouting family and the American public.

Earlier today, following the most comprehensive listening exercise in Scouting's history, the approximately 1,400 voting members of the Boy Scouts of America's National Council approved a resolution to remove the restriction denying membership to youth on the basis of sexual orientation alone. The resolution also reinforces that Scouting is a youth program, and any sexual conduct, whether heterosexual or homosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting. A change to the current membership policy for adult leaders was not under consideration; thus, the policy for adults remains in place. As the National Executive Committee just completed a lengthy review process, there are no plans for further review on this matter.

This policy change is effective Jan. 1, 2014, allowing the Boy Scouts of America the transition time needed to communicate and implement this policy to its approximately 116,000 Scouting units. As the Scout Executive/CEO of the Blue Grass Council, I believe this update to our policy will allow all kids who sincerely want to be a part of Scouting to experience this life-changing program and to remain true to the long-standing virtues of Scouting. While people have different opinions about this policy, we can all agree that kids are better off when they are in Scouting.

At the Blue Grass Council, I take great pride in creating an environment where people and religious organizations, who may disagree on a variety of topics, still work together to achieve life-changing benefits to youth through its program. Scouting will continue to focus on reaching and serving youth in order to help them grow into good, strong citizens. By focusing on the goals that unite us, we are able to accomplish incredible things for young people in the communities we serve.

Yours in Scouting,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chip".

Chip Armishaw

Scout Executive/CEO

Blue Grass Council