



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/, 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)