

Dr. Robert M. Gates
July 27, 2015

I AM HONORED TO SERVE AS NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA. EVERY DAY, IN EVERY COMMUNITY IN AMERICA, SCOUTING IS CHANGING LIVES—TEACHING YOUNG PEOPLE SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP, AND HELPING THEM BUILD CHARACTER AND INTEGRITY.

AS I SAID DURING OUR NATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING IN MAY, DUE TO THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND LEGAL CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN OUR COUNTRY AND IN OUR MOVEMENT, I DID NOT BELIEVE THE ADULT LEADERSHIP POLICY COULD BE SUSTAINED. ANY EFFORT TO DO SO WAS INEVITABLY GOING TO RESULT IN SIMULTANEOUS LEGAL BATTLES IN MULTIPLE JURISDICTIONS AND AT STAGGERING COST.

THE BEST WAY TO ALLOW THE BSA TO CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON ITS MISSION AND PRESERVE ITS CORE VALUES WAS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE AND SET OUR OWN COURSE. AND THAT'S WHAT WE'VE DONE.

ON MONDAY, JULY 27, THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD RATIFIED A RESOLUTION REMOVING THE NATIONAL RESTRICTION ON OPENLY GAY ADULT LEADERS AND EMPLOYEES. THIS FOLLOWS THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WHICH ADOPTED THE RESOLUTION EARLIER IN JULY.

THIS MEANS CHARTERED ORGANIZATIONS WILL CONTINUE TO SELECT THEIR OWN ADULT LEADERS. RELIGIOUS CHARTERED ORGANIZATIONS MAY CONTINUE TO USE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AS A CRITERION FOR SELECTING ADULT LEADERS, INCLUDING IN MATTERS OF SEXUALITY.

SCOUTING'S MEMBERS AND PARENTS WILL CONTINUE TO SELECT LOCAL UNITS, CHARTERED TO ORGANIZATIONS WITH SIMILAR BELIEFS THAT BEST MEET THE NEEDS OF THEIR FAMILIES.

WHAT REMAINS UNCHANGED IS EVERYONE ASSOCIATED WITH SCOUTING AGREES TO FOLLOW NATIONAL POLICIES AND COMPLY WITH BSA'S BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS; NO YOUTH MAY BE DENIED MEMBERSHIP TO OUR ORGANIZATION ON THE BASIS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION; AND NO COUNCIL CAN

DENY A CHARTER TO A UNIT THAT IS FOLLOWING THE BELIEFS OF ITS RELIGIOUS CHARTERING ORGANIZATION.

FOR FAR TOO LONG THIS ISSUE HAS DIVIDED AND DISTRACTED US. NOW IT'S TIME TO UNITE BEHIND OUR SHARED BELIEF IN THE EXTRAORDINARY POWER OF SCOUTING TO BE A FORCE FOR GOOD IN A COMMUNITY AND IN THE LIVES OF ITS YOUTH MEMBERS.

WE DELIVER FUN, CHARACTER-BUILDING, LEADERSHIP-DEVELOPING EXPERIENCES AND ADVENTURES THAT YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS LOVE. WE'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR 105 YEARS. I AM CONFIDENT WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO FOR ANOTHER CENTURY.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF SCOUTING. GOD BLESS THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA.