

# 2010 BSA Letter Writing Campaign

It was only in the year 2000 that the United States Supreme Court ruled that the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) was free to establish their own exclusionary membership criteria on the grounds of both religious belief and sexual orientation.

As we have seen since this ruling, there has been an enormous amount of controversy surrounding BSA, as an organization, on its relationship with public and governmental agencies, and on its exclusionary practices and policies. BSA's declaration that they are a "private religious organization," with the constitutional right to freely discriminate on whatever grounds they see fit, has only spawned more legal and other problems for them.

BSA has now included the disabled on its list of undesirables and has created an atmosphere reminiscent of the McCarthy era. BSA has created an environment where anyone, including long standing members are thrown out, shunned and retaliated against for the slightest inkling of disagreement with or question the paid professional staff of the National and local Councils. BSA also blatantly disregards its own long-touted Scout Law and its own internal policies and procedures.

While BSA publicly claims that it has long "encouraged" support for and inclusion of the disabled, recent policy changes and actions against some members show quite the opposite. While BSA claims that they have always excluded atheists and gays, they went a big step further this time and actually changed its policies in writing with regard to the disabled. Attached is a copy of BSA's Risk Management Notebook.

Of particular interest from BSA's Risk Management Notebook - Non-Scout Use of Scout Facilities (Rev. 8/2008) please note:

*"... Scouting is a private club exempt from the Americans with Disabilities Act, and that the outside group using Scout property is responsible for complying with the Act and accommodating the needs of its participants."*

*"...because Scouting is a private club, and therefore Scouting facilities are not subject to the requirements of the ADA."*

*"Therefore, with respect to Scout facilities that are used for Scout activities and events, Councils do not have any ADA obligations. This includes Council events attended by Scout families and invited guests, such as Eagle Scout ceremonies and Scout Camp events."*

*"...it may be clear that the outside group, e.g. a public school class, is open to the public. ...Councils must be sure that the burden of complying with the ADA is shifted to the outside group leasing Council property."*

*"While Scouting makes every effort to accommodate all persons with disabilities, it is a charitable, private organization not subject to the ADA, and any group who uses the property is responsible for ADA compliance and any accommodations necessary for its participants and visitors."*

In another extraordinary step, BSA has re-written its own "mandatory" camp standards, which up until 2008 required compliance with the ADA, to a non-mandatory status in 2009 which asks staff to make facilities for the disabled available "if possible".

BSA also receives Federal funds in the form of contracts, fees, grants, legislation, commemorative coins, discounts, land and property access, etc. These funds, help to perpetuate a tax supported "private" entity which has chosen to excluded many of the people it claims to "help...at all times".

The discriminatory practices of the Scouts have gone on long enough. Gays, atheists, the disabled are all excluded, retaliated against and shunned by the organization. This unethical behavior comes from an organization that claims to "...help other people at all times..." and to be "Trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent." Who will be next? Who will the BSA exclude next in its efforts to uphold "values"?

I write to ask that you join with me in protesting BSA's bias membership and operational policies. I ask that you demand through your legislators that no Federal funding or gratuities be given to BSA as long as they maintain their prejudices and mistreatment of the disabled, atheists and gays. I ask that you join me in exposing BSA to the media, the public-at-large and politicians who should be very concerned about how tax dollars are being spent.

Please send a letter asking former President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, Jr. to disaffiliate from BSA. He currently serves on BSA's Advisory Council.

Surely, Mr. Carter does not want his stellar reputation of tolerance and kindness to be tarnished by his affiliation with BSA. Letters will enlighten him to the seriousness of this matter. Mr. Carter can be contacted at:

James E. Carter, Jr.  
c/o Carter Center  
453 Freedom Parkway NE  
Atlanta, GA 30307

Thank you in advance for taking the time to add your voice to this protest. Please send a copy of your letter to:

**Anti-Discrimination Support Network**  
P. O. Box 242  
Pocopson, PA 19366

Email: [downey1@downey1.cnc.net](mailto:downey1@downey1.cnc.net)

