

Freethought Society

July 4, 2010

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

Dear Former President Carter,

I first contacted you regarding your Advisory Board position with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) on January 9, 1996. I followed that correspondence with another letter dated, January 15, 1996 (please see enclosed). Fifteen years later, my message to you remains the same — please re-consider your affiliation with BSA.

In 2000, BSA declared itself a “private” organization and the United States Supreme Court recognized it as such in the Dale v. Boy Scouts of America case. Thus began the blatant application of BSA’s “right of association” stance. I write to update you and to seek your assistance in ending a highly unethical situation.

BSA discrimination has worsened, Mr. Carter. BSA camp manuals are being revised indicating that BSA is no longer (as a private organization) required to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act regulations. I am aware of several instances where wheelchair bound people have been rejected from participation.

While it is legal for a group to institute private membership rules, it is highly immoral for the world’s largest youth group to advocate intolerance and separation from certain members of the community. I’m sure you agree that prejudice against homosexuals and atheists is NOT an American value. Yet, BSA advocates a policy of segregation from those who they have prejudged as unworthy of association.

The question is whether or not BSA is listening to members of their Advisory Board, of which you are a member. The fact that the bigotry continues can only mean one of two things:

1. You are in agreement with the policy
2. Your voice of objection is not being heard

If, in fact, you oppose a policy that represents separation and intolerance, you should consider firmly and publicly announcing your resignation from an advisory board position with BSA.

Your voice of objection could significantly impact BSA’s membership policy. Please join us in our quest to treat every citizen with respect, dignity and participation. BSA’s membership policy is an antiquated viewpoint that must be changed. You can help, by refusing to have your good name associated with BSA’s limited membership policy.

Sincerely,

Margaret Downey

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Advocating separation of church and state, freedom of expression, freedom from religious intrusion and freedom of choice.

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