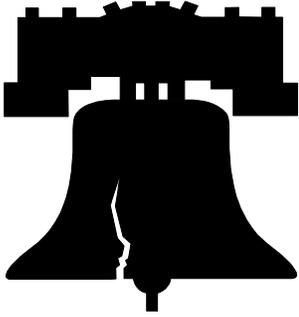
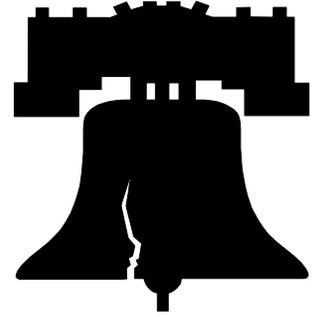


The Greater Philadelphia Story



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National and Local Taxpayer Money Continues to Support Boy Scouts of America Bigotry

By Margaret Downey

In the March/April 2004 issue of *The Greater Philadelphia Story*, I called on readers to participate in an outreach effort to prevail upon Philadelphia mayor **John Street** either to oust the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) from the city-owned building they have long occupied at 22nd and Winter Streets, or at the very least charge BSA fair-market rent. A form protest letter was included in that newsletter. Readers were requested to fill in their names, sign, and mail the letters directly to the mayor's office. If all our subscribers had done so, Mayor Street would have received about 400 letters by now. Regardless of our efforts, however, BSA still occupies the building at 22nd and Winter Streets rent free. They have been at that location free-of-charge since 1928!

Since the Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia protest letter campaign began, the city of Philadelphia has suffered mass transit fare hikes, cut-back of library hours, librarian layoffs, city employee benefits cuts, and general budgetary misery. One must ask; How many city services would have been spared had the city insisted that BSA pay their fair-market value rent?

The date of June 28, 2000 should be noted as the day BSA began to owe rent to the city of Philadelphia. It was on that date that BSA was recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court as being a "private" organization. BSA declared their "private" status as a strategy to win the case of *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale*. Demanding the right to discriminate based on religious belief and/or sexual orientation, BSA was willing to abandon its long-standing Congressionally declared "open-to-the-public" status and adopt its current position as a "private organization."

Immediately after the U.S. Supreme court ruling in favor of BSA, House of Representative members **Barney Frank, Chuck Shumer, Lynn Woolsey, Diane Fienstein, Bob Filner, Cynthia McKinney, Barbara Lee, Tammy**

Baldwin, George Miller, Nancy Pelosi, John Oliver, Janice Schakowsky, Jerold Nadler, and Barbara Boxer led a campaign to revoke a Congressional Charter that was awarded in 1916 to BSA.

The Charter acknowledged BSA as a "patriotic" and "charitable" organization with the expressed purpose of teaching "scout crafting." There is not one mention in the Charter that "religion" plays a major role in BSA's purpose and mission. The Charter, in fact, recognizes BSA as an "educational" organization.

Congressional Charters are not intended to include public funding, but the honor of being recognized by Congress has greatly benefited BSA. For instance, the government of the United States allows BSA to use publicly held land for their jamborees for the nominal rental fee of \$1.

Thanks to the Congressional Charter recognition, the United States military provides BSA with surplus tents, camping equipment, and ammunition. Yes, AMMUNITION! BSA claims to need the ammunition to teach safe riflery. BSA is a "private" organization that openly discriminates against the Atheist and homosexual communities yet the military happily provides benefits, gratuities and bullets.

The gallant efforts of the above mentioned House lawmakers failed in late 2000. The BSA's Congressional Charter should be challenged again. The time is long past for a "private" organization that openly and proudly discriminates against the Atheist and homosexual communities to receive governmental endorsement, in particular, endorsement by the members of the Congress who are supposed to protect and represent all citizens of this great country. It is time for taxpayers to demand that their money is not used to support a private organization that refuses to serve all citizens equally and without prejudice. Even faith-based organizations have agreed to service the entire community without favoritism! →

What You Can Do to End BSA Favoritism:

(addendum to the previous page)

Local Activism

Last year concerned members of the Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia (FSGP) mounted a letter-writing campaign aimed at convincing Mayor Street to enforce the Fair Practices ordinance (Philadelphia Charter and Code of Ordinances, Title 9, Chapter 9-1105, 668-669) prohibiting the use of public accommodations to any person or organization who would deny access "...because of his race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap or marital status, either directly or indirectly."

FSGP called on the City of Philadelphia to enforce the provisions of the ordinance, requiring that public property and resources be used only to service the community without prejudice. The letter sent to Mayor Street specifically asked that the city-owned building located at 22nd and Winter Streets occupied by the Cradle of Liberty Council of the Boy Scouts of America (CoLBSA) rent-free since 1928, be held to the terms of the Fair Practices ordinance.

As of this date, CoLBSA is still not paying rent, even in the face of financial problems facing the city. Local FSGP members are now being asked to participate in a telephone campaign. Please don't hesitate to pick up the phone and state your concerns.

Please be calm and articulate when discussing the issue with the city representative who takes your call. Make sure to know exactly what you intend to say prior to placing the phone call. If this article and the previous article did not provide enough information, please see the following website: www.scoutingforall.org.

Listed below are all members of City Council and their phone numbers (all numbers listed are in the 215 area code). Please let FSGP know the responses you receive from calling:

Frank Diccio (1st District).....	686-3458
Anna C. Verna (2nd District).....	686-3412
Jannie L. Blackwell (3rd District).....	686-3418
Michael A. Nutter (4th District).....	686-3416
Darrell L. Clarke (5th District).....	686-3442
Joan L. Krajewski (6th District).....	686-3444
Richard T. Mariano (7th District).....	686-3448
Donna Reed Miller (8th District).....	686-3424
Marian B. Tasco (9th District).....	686-3454
Brian J. O'Neil (10th District).....	686-3422
Blondell Reynolds Brown (Council At-Large)...	686-3438
David Cohen (Council At-Large).....	686-3446
W. Wilson Goode, Jr. (Council At-Large).....	686-3414
Jack Kelly (Council At-Large).....	686-3452
James F. Kenney (Council At-Large).....	686-3450
Juan F. Ramos (Council At-Large).....	686-3420
Frank Rizzo (Council At-Large).....	686-3440

National Activism

If you are angered by the fact that the BSA's Congressional Charter encourages and endorses their "private" membership rules, contact Congresswoman **Lynn Woolsey**'s office (6th District) to join with her in a campaign to revoke the BSA Congressional Charter:

Lynn Woolsey
1050 Northgate Drive, Suite 354
San Rafael, CA 94903
Phone: (415) 507-9554
Fax: (415) 507-9601

Lynn Woolsey
1101 College Avenue, Suite 200
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
Phone: (707) 542-7182
Fax: (707) 542-2745

Lynn Woolsey
2263 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-5161
Fax: (202) 225-5163

Woolsey is willing to continue pursuing the goal of separating BSA from governmental endorsement but she needs to hear from more citizens who are outraged at BSA getting so many benefits and gratuities with the use of taxpayer money.

You can take your passion further by taking the time to contact your Congressional representative. When you determine your Senator's contact information, please call, write, e-mail, and fax your concerns. Please send a copy of any written correspondence you produce regarding this issue to:

Scouting For All
P.O. Box 2832
Petaluma, CA 94953-2832

BSA Issue
c/o Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia
P.O. Box 242
Pocopson, PA 19366-2424

Get fired up!
Don't let any of your tax money go to BSA.
Tell BSA to pitch their tents on private land not government owned public land!

