



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1535

Resolution condemning the Boy Scouts of America’s discriminatory policy of banning lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender scouts and troop leaders.

By Council Members Dromm, Brewer, Chin, James, Koppell, Koslowitz, Lander, Mendez, Palma, Rose, Rodriguez, Lappin, Garodnick and Mark-Viverito

Whereas, The Boy Scouts of America was founded in 1910; and

Whereas, According to its Vision Statement, “The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law”; and

Whereas, The Scout Oath is, “On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight”; and

Whereas According to the Scout Law, a Scout is “trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent”; and

Whereas, Despite its noble mission, the Boy Scouts of America has an unfortunate and longstanding policy of excluding gay, bisexual and transgender youth from its membership, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (“LGBT”) adults from its leadership; and

Whereas, The Boy Scouts of America has spoken out against LGBT-inclusive leadership on numerous occasions, stating that “homosexuals do not provide a desirable role model for Scouts” and that “homosexual conduct is inconsistent with the obligations in the Scout Oath and Scout Law to be morally straight and clean in thought, word, and deed”; and

Whereas, More recently, in June 2012, the Boy Scouts of America issued a policy statement indicating that while it does not seek information on the sexual orientation of those involved in the organization, “[it does] not grant membership to individuals who are open and avowed homosexuals or who engage in behavior that would become a distraction to the mission of the [Boy Scouts of America]”; and

Whereas, In July 2012, after a two-year review of its exclusionary policy, the Boy Scouts of America announced that there would be no changes to the policy and that it was “absolutely the best policy for the Boy Scouts”; and

Whereas, Despite its clearly discriminatory policy, the right of the Boy Scouts of America to exclude LGBT youth and adults from its organization has been upheld by the United States Supreme Court, which ruled in *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale* that, since it is a private organization, the freedom of association allows it to set its own membership policy; and

Whereas, Excluding LGBT individuals from participation in the Boy Scouts of America only serves to threaten the long-term viability of the organization, which has seen its membership decrease nearly 44 percent over the past four decades; and

Whereas, It is truly unfortunate that an organization that has so much potential to instill in its members a sense of citizenship, civic involvement and service to the community sees fit to deny membership to an entire segment of the population simply because of whom they love; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York condemns the Boy Scouts of America’s discriminatory policy of banning lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender scouts and troop leaders.