



## Legislation Text

**File #:** Res 0236-2002, **Version:** \*

Res. No. 236

Resolution calling upon the appropriate committee of the Council of the City of New York to hold hearings to investigate the nature and extent of the resources and special support the Boy Scouts of America receives from the City of New York and/or its uniformed forces, and explore whether such resources would be better spent on organizations that do not discriminate based on sexual orientation.

By Council Members Lopez, Quinn, Reed, the Speaker (Mr. Miller) and Council Members Perkins, Brewer, Comrie, DeBlasio, Gerson, Moskowitz, Rivera, Serrano and Yassky; also Council Member Jackson

Whereas, The City of New York recognizes the importance of equal opportunities for all New Yorkers and cherishes its historic role as a haven for the oppressed; and

Whereas, Accordingly, it is the policy and law of the City of New York to protect individuals against discrimination based on their sexual orientation; and

Whereas, It is the policy of the Boy Scouts of America (the "BSA") to bar openly gay youths and adults from membership and employment in the BSA; and

Whereas, Gay youth, who are often targets of anti-gay harassment and brutality, need and deserve to participate in youth development programs; and

Whereas, Non-gay youth also need to hear a message of respect for the rights of all people; and

Whereas, The BSA's discriminatory policy is not in concert with the American ideals of diversity, inclusion and fairness; and

Whereas, As a result of BSA's discriminatory policy, many local United Way organizations have decertified the BSA from eligibility for funding; and

Whereas, The New York City Police Department (the "NYPD") and other City agencies currently operate various programs in partnership with the BSA; and

Whereas, Other groups that do not have a policy of discriminating against gay and lesbian youth and adults, such as the National 4H Council, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and Campfire Boys and Girls, receive no such support or assistance; and

Whereas, The City's continued partnership with and special support for the BSA sends the message to the children, parents and families of New York that it is acceptable to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation; and

Whereas, Such a message is dangerous and threatening not only to gays and lesbians but also to the very fabric of our society; and

Whereas, On February 26, 2001, the Council's Committee on Contracts held a hearing into the discriminatory policies of the BSA as well as the nature and extent of the City's ties to the BSA; and

Whereas, At that hearing, the Greater New York Councils of the BSA (the "GYNC"), the local BSA organization, acknowledged that the BSA's anti-gay policy was wrong and that the GNYC does not discriminate based on sexual orientation; and

Whereas, Further, at that hearing the GNYC testified that it was in the process of attempting to convince its parent organization, the BSA, to renounce its discriminatory policy and that if unsuccessful, it would request permission from the BSA to opt out of the BSA's anti-gay policy and instead enforce its own non-discriminatory policy; and

Whereas, Based on this testimony, the Committee agreed to defer the issue to give the GNYC time to achieve its stated goal; and

Whereas, According to a resolution dated February 6, 2002 and issued by the national officers of the BSA, "an avowed homosexual cannot serve as a role model for the values of [BSA] Oath and Law", and "membership [in the BSA] is contingent upon one's willingness to accept the values and standards espoused by the Boy Scouts of America"; and

Whereas, According to the resolution, "the BSA's values cannot be subject to local option choices, but must be the same in every unit"; and

Whereas, Based on the BSA resolution, it appears that the GNYC was not able to convince the BSA to renounce its anti-gay policy or to permit the GNYC to opt out and create its own non-discriminatory policy with respect to gay youth and adults; and

Whereas, Nevertheless, the GNYC issued a position statement on February 12, 2002, stating that the GNYC does not discriminate and has not "excluded or removed anyone from our organization because of their sexual orientation for more than twenty years" but that it "does deny registration to individuals who, in a Scouting context, choose to make their sexual orientation or preference an issue"; and

Whereas, The BSA has not responded to the GNYC's position statement; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the appropriate committee of the Council of the City of New York hold hearings to investigate the nature and extent of the resources and special support the Boy Scouts of America receives from the City of New York and/or its uniformed forces, and explore whether such resources would be better spent on organizations that do not discriminate based on sexual orientation.