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**Date:** June 6, 2013  
**To:** Scout Executives, Area Directors, and Regional Directors  
**cc:** Office of the Chief Scout Executive  
**From:** Gary Butler, Assistant Chief Scout Executive, Operations  
**Subject:** Scouting and Social/Political Causes

There have been several questions raised recently concerning our members wearing their uniforms while participating in events supporting political and social issues. The following is an official statement on Scouting and social and political causes. We distribute a similar statement annually. In support of your responsibilities in keeping your volunteers and staff informed regarding this particular policy, please share this as appropriate.

As you are aware, the newly approved Boy Scouts of America membership standards resolution restates what has always been the BSA's policy, that "the Boy Scouts of America does not have an agenda on the matter of sexual orientation, and resolving this complex issue is not the role of the organization, nor may any member use Scouting to promote or advance any social or political position or agenda." However, Scouting is not to be used to advance pro- or anti-gay agendas at events, such as parades or other such political or social advocacy functions. It has always been the BSA's policy that no person—youth or adult—may use Scouting to promote sexual orientation or any other political or social agenda.

Such behavior or action is inconsistent with the BSA's values and virtues. There must be no doubt that the BSA is not advocating any content or subject matter of advocacy or acceptance for or against homosexual behavior. Registered members who violate the rules and regulations of the Boy Scouts of America by engaging in such must be dealt with appropriately by the local council. *The National Council will engage with local councils as they determine the appropriate actions when these policies are violated.*

The BSA's rules and regulations specify that the official uniforms are intended for use in connection with Scouting activities as defined by the National Executive Board. Their use may be approved by the local council for council events or activities under conditions **consistent with the rules and regulations** of the Boy Scouts of America.

It has long been the BSA's position and interpretation of its rules that uniformed unit members and leaders may participate in flag ceremonies at events and may lead the Pledge of Allegiance; however, they should retire after the ceremony and not remain on the speakers' platform, participate in the event, or remain in a conspicuous location where viewers could construe their presence as an endorsement or symbol of support. In addition, photos or video with Scouts in uniform or BSA marks and logos are not allowed in campaign materials of any kind. The purpose of this is to ensure that there is not a perception that the BSA, the council, or even the uniformed members favor one candidate (or platform) over another.

This interpretation of BSA rules and regulations and our bylaws is consistent with past practices, and nothing set forth in the resolution (which is not in effect until Jan. 1, 2014) changes that interpretation, nor was it the intent of the resolution to do so.