



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 28, 2012

Catholic Bishops to Investigate Moral Slide of Girl Scouts Organization

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has a gift for the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A (GSUSA) just in time for the organization's one hundredth anniversary. The bishops' [Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth](#) has launched an investigation into charges that the GSUSA partners with groups and individuals that promote abortion, contraception, and homosexuality.



According to the [Catholic News Agency](#) (CNA), in March the committee's chairman, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, wrote his fellow bishops to inform them that the committee had met to discuss "a variety of the concerns" that have been raised by church members and leadership over the past several years, including "possible problematic relationships with other organizations" and "problematic programmatic materials and resources." Among the most troubling of the "problematic relationships" is the Girl Scouts' alleged connection with Planned Parenthood, the nation's premier abortion provider and a leading purveyor of contraception.

In February [The New American](#) reported that despite the Girl Scouts' insistence that it has no relationship with the abortion giant, "in 2008 nearly [25 percent of GSUSA councils](#) across the United States said that they had a relationship with Planned Parenthood." That same year "on NBC's Today show, then-GSUSA CEO Kathy Cloninger confirmed her organization's [partnership with the abortion/contraception provider](#)," continued [The New American](#). "Even as the Girl Scouts organization was denying the connection, none other than Planned Parenthood's congressional aide, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), called the relationship between the two groups '[very valuable](#).'"

Planned Parenthood's influence among the GSUSA extends to materials that run the gamut from morally questionable to downright obscene. Twelve years ago, a group of residents in Crawford, Texas, home of former President George W. Bush, were appalled "to find out that the Girl Scout organization has been giving its endorsement for years to a Planned Parenthood sex-ed program in which girls and boys are given literature on homosexuality, masturbation, and condoms," reported [USA Today](#).

But it's not just a thing of the past, noted [The New American](#). "According to [Austin Ruse](#), president of the [Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute](#), a March 2010 United Nations women's conference



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included a closed-door session sponsored by GSUSA, during which a teen-focused Planned Parenthood brochure, entitled [Healthy, Happy and Hot](#), was discussed and distributed,” reported TNA. “To say the least, the content of the brochure leans toward the pornographic, is geared toward both hetero- and homosexual relationships, and counsels kids (in one of the milder examples), ‘There is no right or wrong way to have sex. Just have fun, explore, and be yourself!’”

Earlier this year an [investigative report by the CNA](#) found that the connection to Planned Parenthood and the abortion/contraception culture appears to thread its way straight to the top of the GSUSA bureaucracy. As examples, the report noted:

- “GSUSA CEO Anna Maria Chavez partnered with [Planned Parenthood](#) as head of Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas.”
- “GSUSA National President Connie Lindsey [donates](#) to the pro-abortion, pro-LGBT Chicago Foundation for Women.”
- “GSUSA Board Member Monica Gil is a [volunteer](#) and former [board member](#) (through 2011) of the Saban Free Clinic in L.A., which [provides ‘free and easy’](#) birth control, emergency contraception, and abortion referrals to teens over 12, without parental notice or consent.”
- “GSUSA Board Member and Executive Secretary Debra Nakatomi is [International Commissioner](#) to the [pro-abortion](#) World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and promoted contraceptives to [Asian teens](#) through California’s [Get Real](#) program.”
- “[Laurie Westley](#), GSUSA Senior Vice President of Public Policy, Advocacy and the Research Institute, previously worked for the [National Women’s Political Caucus](#), a group dedicated to electing pro-choice women.”
- “Joan Wagon, the GSUSA Treasurer, Board of Directors, accepted large [campaign contributions](#) from late-term abortionist George Tiller while she was Secretary of Kansas’ Department of Revenue and praised Tiller’s ‘[social conscience and ... big heart.](#)’” She qualified that endorsement, however, adding: “If you didn’t know that George did abortions, you’d think he was the world’s nicest guy.”

The GSA’s dubious connections extend past the abortion culture, however. The CNA investigation found that among the GSUSA’s staff are individuals closely connected with homosexual activism. For example, the group’s Chief of External Affairs, [Timothy Higdon](#), is not only an [openly “gay” man](#), but a seasoned [homosexual activist](#) as well. As an example, in 2002 he headed a Florida homosexual rights organization that worked closely with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Additionally, GSUSA staff member [Deborah Taft](#), a Senior VP for Fund Development, “sits on the Human Rights Campaign’s (HRC) [Board of Governors](#),” the CNA noted, adding that the HRC is well-known for pushing homosexual marriage, “and is an [adoption bully](#), pummeling religious adoption agencies that prefer married heterosexuals to homosexual pairs.” The CNA also noted that one of the GSUA’s media spokespersons, [Joshua Ackley](#), is “the former lead singer of the [Dead Betties](#), a queer band whose music videos feature masturbation, prostitution, and sexualized violence against women.”

Such GSUSA baggage would give the Catholic bishops plenty of concern over the organization. But, according to a more recent CNA report, there have been other complaints from Catholic Church members over the GSUSA’s moral slide. “In 2010, two teenage girls who had spent eight years in Girl Scouts left the organization and created [Speak Now: Girl Scouts](#), a website dedicated to raising awareness about the problems they discovered within the organization,” reported the CNA. “The two



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young teens — Tess and Sydney — said that it had become ‘increasingly apparent’ that the Girl Scouts organization had values that were incompatible with their own.” The two girls said that leaving the Girl Scouts “was not a casual, easy, or convenient decision.” Ultimately, however they decided to take a stand “for our beliefs, for the dignity of life, the sanctity of marriage, modesty, and purity.”

Of the Catholic bishops’ investigation, bishop spokeswoman Sister Mary Ann Walsh explained: “There had been some complaints about the Scouts, and the bishops couldn’t turn a deaf ear ... they want to know, what’s the story?”

The [Washington Post](#) quoted Girl Scouts spokeswoman Michelle Tompkins as saying that the organization has had “a strong relationship with the Catholic Church for 98 years. We don’t expect it to change.”

But Mary Rice Hasson, a visiting fellow in Catholic Studies at the [Ethics and Public Policy Center](#), a conservative think tank in Washington, offered another perspective. “A collision course is probably a good description of where things are headed,” she said. “The leadership of the Girl Scouts is reflexively liberal. Their board is dominated by people whose views are antithetical to the teachings of the Catholic Church.”

According to the CNA, the controversy over the GSUSA’s policies has prompted some parents — Catholic and otherwise — to pull their daughters out of the secular group and enroll them in a more wholesome and faith-centered group called [American Heritage Girls](#). Founded in 1995 by a group of Ohio parents who wanted “a wholesome program for their daughters,” the American Heritage Girls has grown to more than 19,000 members in 45 states.

Additionally, noted the CNA, “recent years have also brought significant growth for the [Little Flowers Girls Club](#), a Catholic program for girls aimed at promoting virtue by exploring saints, Scripture, and the Catechism. Started in 1993 by a Catholic mom of 11, Little Flowers now has some 50 registered groups throughout the U.S. and Canada.... The group says that it ‘strives to bring the Catholic faith alive and inspire the girls to become authentic Catholic women.’”



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