



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on September 17, 2012

## Boy Scouts Accused of Covering Up Child Molestation by Leaders

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is facing allegations that it hid hundreds of cases of child molestation on the part of Scout leaders from the 1970s to the 90s, and even helped admitted offenders cover their tracks, allowing them to cite other reasons for suddenly resigning from their leadership positions.

According to a report in the September 16 [Los Angeles Times](#), a review of 1,600 internal Boy Scouts case files from those years uncovered details of both alleged and confirmed child molesters within the organization. Frequently, according to the *Times*, volunteers and employees “suspected of abuse were allowed to leave, citing bogus reasons such as business demands, ‘chronic brain dysfunction,’ and duties at a Shakespeare festival.”

For decades the BSA has dealt with the problem of pedophiles and molesters slipping through its screening process, and since the 1990s has added layers of safeguards to its application process for selecting Scout leaders. The issue helps to explain why the BSA decided earlier this year to maintain its longtime ban on admitted homosexual men and women from serving in leadership positions in the organization.

Since 1919 the BSA has maintained a file of both known and alleged molesters who have been blacklisted from serving in the organization. While BSA attorneys have consistently fought in court to keep those records sealed, the 1,600 cases were culled from lawsuits filed against the organization and Scout leaders over the years. Nearly 1,200 “ineligible volunteer” files from 1965 to 1985 are set to be released for public view under an order by the Oregon Supreme Court. The files were part of a 2010 lawsuit in which an Oregon jury found the BSA liable in a pedophile case from the 1980s, awarding the plaintiff nearly \$20 million in damages. According to individuals involved in the Oregon case, the BSA is currently facing more than 50 pending child sexual abuse cases in 18 states.

In its report the *Los Angeles Times* implied that the Boy Scouts’ efforts to keep child molesters out of its leadership ranks was ineffective, and that some local officials actually worked to protect the accused. “Men expelled for alleged abuses slipped back into the program, only to be accused of molesting again,” alleged the *Times*, “Now, a more extensive review has shown that Scouts sometimes abetted molesters by keeping allegations under wraps.”

The *Times* said that in more than 500 instances of alleged molestation by its leaders, “the Scouts learned about it from boys, parents, staff members, or anonymous tips. In about 400 of those cases — 80% — there is no record of Scouting officials reporting the allegations to police. In more than 100 of the cases, officials actively sought to conceal the alleged abuse or allowed the suspects to hide it....”





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*Times* reporters pored through those hundreds of cases to find the most blatant examples of actions on the part of BSA officials that allowed alleged molesters to go free and to continue their targeting of children. For example, reported the *Times*, in 1976 “five Boy Scouts wrote detailed complaints accusing a Pennsylvania scoutmaster of two rapes and other sex crimes, according to his file. He abruptly resigned in writing, saying he had to travel more for work. ‘Good luck to you in your new position,’ a top troop representative wrote back. He said he was accepting the resignation ‘with extreme regret.’ ” The *Times* report also appears to accuse the BSA of buffering its investigations and handling of abuse allegations in a policy of secrecy that included, among other options, a form letter advising those they were dismissing from leadership: “We ... desire to have you sever your relationship with the Boy Scouts of America. We are making no accusations and will not release this information to anyone, so our action in no way will affect your standing in the community.”

The report takes great pains to highlight one particularly troubling instance in which a leader in Chesapeake, Virginia, with 50 years of Scouting experience was allowed, with the facilitation of a local Scout official, to continue his secret life as a serial child molester. In 1978 local Scouting officials discovered that Arthur W. Humphries had sexually abused a 12-year-old Scout under his supervision. “Officials not only failed to report Humphries’ alleged crime to police, records show — they also gave him a strong job reference two years later, when he applied for a post at a national Scouting event,” reported the *Times*.

In 1981 Humphries’ local Scout supervisor wrote the following letter to the national BSA office: “I believe the attached letters of recommendation and the newspaper write-up will give you a well rounded picture of Art. If selected, I am sure that he would add much to the handicapped awareness trail at the 1981 Jamboree.”

Three years later Humphries was arrested and convicted of sexually abusing 20 Boy Scouts, some as young as eight, and sentenced to 151 years in prison.

Officials with the Boy Scouts of America responded to the *Los Angeles Times* article with a statement saying they regretted past incidents that harmed children involved with Boy Scout programs, and pointing out that they have “always cooperated fully with any request from law enforcement and today require our members to report even suspicion of abuse directly to their local authorities.” They added that the cases highlighted by the *Times* represent a very small fraction of the adults who have worked in the organization, and that the organization has “continuously enhanced its multi-tiered policies and procedures, which now include background checks, comprehensive training programs and safety policies.” Each year since the 1960s the Boy Scouts have counted between 3.5 and 5 million youth participants, and more than one million leaders and volunteers.

As noted by [The New American](#) in July, one of the ways in which the Boy Scouts have chosen to protect boys in their programs is by continuing with the organization’s longtime policy of disallowing admitted homosexuals from serving as Scout leaders. Bob Mazzuca, the Boy Scouts’ chief executive, explained that while he understood there were many who disagreed with the re-enforcement of that policy, the “vast majority of the parents of youth we serve value their rights to address issues of same-sex orientation within their family, with spiritual advisers, and at the appropriate time and in the right setting.”

While the Boy Scouts have received significant criticism from homosexual activists over the policy, supporters point out that the proscription against homosexuals in the organization, which exists to build solid character and integrity in young men, is inextricably tied to the official [Boy Scout Oath](#), which requires that the conduct of the group’s members — as well as its leaders — remain “morally straight.”

*Photo: BSA National Office in Irving, Texas*



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