



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on April 22, 2014

## Boy Scouts Drop Washington Troop Over Homosexual Scout Leader

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA), which earlier this year dropped its policy banning gay-identifying teens from participation in Scouting programs, has given the boot to a troop in Washington state that insisted on keeping its adult homosexual Scout leader.

According to the *New York Times*, one homosexual activist group said the revocation of the Boy Scouts charter of Seattle's Rainier Beach United Methodist Church was a first for the BSA since the organization officially compromised its 100-year ban on homosexual participation on January 1 of this year. While that policy change does allow teen boys who identify as homosexuals to participate in Scouting, the BSA continued with its ban of openly homosexual adult Scout leaders.



The *New York Times* recalled that earlier in April the BSA had ordered the dismissal of 49-year-old Geoffrey McGrath, a former Eagle Scout, from his position as the leader of the church's Scout troop. The dismissal came after McGrath "spoke about his sexual orientation in a news article profiling the troop, which was formed last year in a south Seattle neighborhood heavily populated by immigrants and lower-income families."

When the church's pastor, Monica Corsaro, refused abide by the BSA edict and remove the homosexual Scout leader, the BSA fired off a letter informing Corsaro that her congregation had lost its BSA charter. Reminding the minister that the BSA "does not allow open or avowed homosexuals to serve as adult volunteer leaders," the letter noted that "nevertheless, Rainier Beach United Methodist Church has stated that it will not remove [McGrath] as a leader and will continue to allow him to serve as an adult leader in violation of the charter agreement and the policies of the Boy Scouts of America. As a result of this refusal to comply with the policies, guidelines, rules, and regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, Rainier Beach United Methodist Church is hereby advised that it is no longer an authorized chartered organization and may no longer use the Scouting program or any of its registered marks or brands."

Corsaro responded to the news by emphasizing that "based on our religious principles, we will continue to act as an autonomous church that does not discriminate. We will continue to have our troop meetings here, every Thursday night, with business as usual." The church is reportedly looking for a boys organization that accepts homosexual leaders with which to partner.

The minister insisted that the BSA's decision went "against everything the Boy Scouts is about. It seems to me that when you are in a dispute with a partner you try to work it out with the partner. It's very



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clear we're not viewed as an equal partner."

McGrath told the Associated Press that "just because the BSA doesn't want to be involved with this church and these kids, we will still have a robust youth program for our kids." He added, "It's one of the best things I do. One of the things that really makes my week is spending time with these kids."

NBC News reported that the "gay fathers" of a child who was a member of the church's Scout troop, "received a letter from the BSA's top leader in Seattle with the offer to transfer to a troop at a local community center" after the BSA revoked the church's charter. "One of the fathers, Kevin Reed, said they had no plans to go elsewhere. Their son, Adrian Benitez, 14, said: 'I don't feel too good about it because it's really offensive to my dads and Geoff.'"

The BSA's double standard, which allows teen members to embrace homosexuality even as it blocks homosexual adults from leading Boy Scout troops, has enraged gay activist groups. Zach Wahls of Scouts for Equality, a group that has aggressively pushed to force the BSA to drop all prohibitions against practicing homosexuals, said that the BSA decision to ban adult homosexual leaders hurts "boys who need the values and leadership of someone like scoutmaster McGrath. Unfortunately, the BSA's decision calls into question its commitment to leadership and values by perpetuating an outmoded policy rooted in fear and discrimination. History will show that today's announcement is a self-inflicted wound."

Similarly, a homosexual group calling itself the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), expressed its rage over the BSA's stand. "That the Boy Scouts of America would punish a church and the young people of Troop 98 because the church's core values emphasize fairness and equality for all of God's children is simply unconscionable," said GLAAD spokesperson Sarah Kate Ellis, who insisted that the decision "flies in the face of the values of Scouting and sends a hurtful message to youth."

For its part, the BSA said through a spokesman that it was "saddened" at having to sever ties with the Seattle church, but claimed that it remained "committed to providing all youth with the best possible scouting experience where the scouting program is the main focus."

While McGrath's dismissal appears to be the first instance of the BSA booting an openly homosexual Scout leader since the group's official policy change allowing gay-identifying youth, many conservative organizations and churches that had been long-time hosts of Scout troops have left the organization over its incremental moral compromise on homosexuality.

Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention, one of the major sponsors of Scouting among evangelical Christian organizations, predicted in December 2013 that the many Southern Baptist churches which have sponsored scouting programs would look for alternatives. "Frankly, I can't imagine a Southern Baptist pastor who would continue to allow his church to sponsor a Boy Scout troop" with the change in policy allowing youth who self-identify as homosexual. Land predicted that "there will be a mass exodus of Southern Baptists and other conservative Christians from the Boy Scouts."

That exodus began happening late last year as an increasing number of troops sponsored by conservative Christian groups left to join boys organizations with values they could embrace, such as [Trail Life USA](#), organized in part by individuals and groups who had previously been involved in traditional Scouting programs.



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