

Boy Scouts Get Donation Backlash for Excluding Gays

The philanthropic arm of shipping giant UPS said it will no longer give money to the Boy Scouts of America as long as the group discriminates against gays, the second major corporation to recently strip funding from the scouts.

The UPS Foundation made the change Thursday after an online petition protesting its annual grants to the Boy Scouts attracted more than 80,000 signatures. UPS, based in Atlanta, follows computer chip maker Intel in withdrawing corporate support for the Boy Scouts.

The UPS Foundation gave more than \$85,000 to the Boy Scouts in 2011, according to its federal tax return.

Federal tax returns for 2011 for Intel, the world's largest chip maker, were not immediately available. Some media reported the Santa Clara, company as giving hundreds of thousands of dollars over the years.

UPS spokeswoman Kristen Petrella said groups applying for the foundation grants will have to adhere to the same standards UPS does by not discriminating against anyone based on race, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

"We promote an environment of diversity and inclusion," Petrella said Monday. "UPS is a company that does the right things for the right reasons."

The UPS Foundation distributed \$45.3 million in grants last year. Petrella said she was not aware of any other current grant recipients who would be affected by the new policy.

Petrella said the company had been concerned about discrimination by the Boy Scouts before the petition drive.

The Boy Scouts said this summer it was sticking with the divisive, long-standing policy of excluding openly gay youth and adults as members and leaders.

Deron Smith, the director of public relations for the Irving, Texas-based Boy Scouts of America, said the group was disappointed about the decision from UPS.

"These types of contributions go directly to serving young people in local councils and this decision will negatively impact youth," Smith said. "Through 110,000 units, scouting represents millions of youth and adult members in diverse communities across the nation, each with a variety of beliefs on this topic."

UPS and Intel changed course after Zach Wahls, an Eagle Scout and founder of the group Scouts for Equality, began online petitions this fall at calling for corporations to end their financial support of the Boy Scouts. That call has been echoed by such groups as the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, which has highlighted the case of an Ohio mother barred from volunteering with her son's Cub Scout pack because she is a lesbian.

"Corporate America gets it better than most: policies that discriminate aren't simply wrong, they're bad for business and they're hurting the scouting community," Wahls said Monday. "You would think that after all the Boy Scouts have lost as a result of this policy, they would understand that."

The policy of excluding gays has also come under increased scrutiny within the last month, as thousands of confidential files released as part of a lawsuit show top Boy Scout leaders for decades carefully tracked thousands of scoutmasters and volunteers who sexually abused boys in their care but routinely failed to report those individuals to law enforcement.

What's your take? Should UPS and Intel make straight kids pay

the price for because the Boy Scouts' policy excludes gays in the wake of scoutmasters sexually abusing boys?

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