

Boy Scouts of America Ends Ban on Gay Leaders

Boy Scouts of America took final steps Monday to remove the organization's national restriction on openly gay adult leaders and employees. However, the Texas-based group is allowing faith-based organizations to select their leaders based on their religious beliefs, including matters of sexuality.

The move was approved by the group's National Executive Board Monday. Of those present and voting, 79 percent voted in favor of the resolution, which is effective immediately. The resolution was recommended for ratification by the Executive Committee earlier this month.

Former Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates serves as national president of the 105-year-old scouting organization.

"What remains unchanged is everyone associated with scouting agrees to follow national policies and comply with BSA's behavioral standards; no youth may be denied membership to our organization on the basis of sexual orientation; and no council can deny a charter to a unit that is following the beliefs of its religious chartering organization."

Gates called for moving past the issue that "has divided and distracted us," calling for unity.

"Now it's time to unite behind our shared belief in the extraordinary power of scouting to be a force for good in a community and in the lives of its youth members."

The organization lifted its ban on gay youth in 2013.