

Statement from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Church Responds to Boy Scouts Policy Vote

SALT LAKE CITY —

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints responded today to the Boy Scouts of America vote on its membership policy with the following statement:

For the past 100 years, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has enjoyed a strong relationship with Boy Scouts of America, based on our mutual interest in helping boys and young men understand and live their duty to God and develop upright moral behavior. As the Church moves forward in its association with the Boy Scouts of America, Church leaders will continue to seek the most effective ways to address the diverse needs of young people in the United States and throughout the world.

The Church's long-established policy for participation in activities is stated in the basic instructional handbook used by lay leaders of the Church: "young men ... who agree to abide by Church standards" are "welcomed warmly and encouraged to participate" ([Handbook 2: Administering the Church \[2010\], 8.17.3](#)). This policy applies to Church-sponsored Scout units. Sexual orientation has not previously been—and is not now—a disqualifying factor for boys who want to join Latter-day Saint Scout troops. Willingness to abide by standards of behavior continues to be our compelling interest.

These standards are outlined in the booklet [For the Strength of Youth](#) and include abstinence from sexual relationships. We remain firmly committed to upholding these standards and to protecting and strengthening boys and young men.

The Church appreciates BSA's reaffirmation of its commitment to "duty to God," which includes service to others and moral behavior—central principles of our teaching to young men. As in the past, the Church will work with BSA to harmonize what Scouting has to offer with the varying needs of our young men. We trust that BSA will implement and administer the approved policy in an appropriate and effective manner.

A letter signed by the First Presidency of the Church is being sent to all Latter-day Saint congregation leaders throughout the United States. The letter will include the reaffirmation of Church policies and standards referenced in today's public statement.

