

BOY SCOUTS SURRENDER

[Bill Donohue](#)

Effective in February, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) will be called Scouting America. The name change was occasioned by years of harassment, lawsuits and bad decisions. The policy changes that the BSA have made are tantamount to surrender. The organization will never be the same.

In the early 1990s, I was asked by the Claremont Institute's Center for the Study of Natural Law to write a monograph about legal attacks on the BSA. "On the Front Line of the Culture War: Recent Attacks on the Boy Scouts of America." It was published in 1993; [a second edition was published in 1996](#).

Before writing my piece, I spoke to an official of the BSA in Irving, Texas explaining what I was doing. He was not at all concerned about the mounting lawsuits, and tried to belittle the issue. He proved to be as clueless as many bishops in the Catholic Church were at that time over the same issue.

Both institutions refused to take the homosexual crisis seriously, and both paid a huge price, financially and reputationally, as a result. We are talking about billions of dollars in both instances. The damage that homosexual Scoutmasters and homosexual priests have done is astounding. Their victims are legion.

In the 1990s, the BSA was sued for its policies on gays, God and girls. It banned openly gay youngsters, required scouts to profess allegiance to God and banned girls. In 2013, it ended the ban on gays and in 2018 it allowed girls to join. While it still encourages Scouts to believe in God, it allows youngsters who belong to non-theistic religions (e.g. Buddhists and Hindus) to be Scouts in good standing.

In short, in the name of inclusivity, the BSA caved. It used

to be a paragon of diversity, but it decided to throw diversity to the wind and bow to the demands of inclusivity. Ironically, like virtually every institution these days, it professes an allegiance to both diversity and inclusion, not realizing that a commitment to one excludes a commitment to the other. It's a mantra, not a reasoned idea.

When the BSA was sued for banning gays, Lee Sneath, its spokesman, said that "as an organization that stresses the values of the family, we believe that homosexuals do not provide the proper role model for youth membership." Though that policy is no longer extant, it was based on sound moral principles.

As political scientist Harry Jaffa explained, "From ancient—and biblical—times, this practice [homosexuality] has been regarded by the greatest legislators and moralists as a vicious sexual perversion. It is condemned equally by the Old and New Testaments, and by Plato in his *Laws*. Thomas Jefferson, in a criminal code written during the American Revolution, made it a felony in the same class as rape. In this he only followed the common law."

Sneath was not off base when he argued in the early 1990s that the Scouts "provide a natural hunting ground for pedophiles." It is undeniably true that homosexual Scoutmasters, having easy access to young boys, were responsible for the rampant sexual abuse. Judge Sally G. Disco of the Los Angeles County Superior Court understood that the exclusion of homosexuals was critical to the Boy Scout mission, but her position has long fallen out of favor with the courts.

The reason the BSA excluded girls should be obvious. There is such a thing called the Girl Scouts. But in a time when the president of the United States wants to punish institutions that don't allow males to compete with females in sports, and to shower with them, the obvious needs explaining. Breaking News: Males and Females are biologically different.

It wasn't just left-wing organizations like the ACLU that helped bring down the BSA; it was the establishment. Levi Strauss, Bank of America and Wells Fargo yanked their donations to the BSA in the summer of 1992 over the exclusion of homosexuals.

The United Way of DeKalb County, Illinois denied funding to the local BSA council, as did the United Way of the San Francisco Bay Area. (Nationwide, the United Way contributed roughly 25 percent of the BSA budget at that time.) The National Park Service jumped on the bandwagon by terminating all agreements with the BSA.

In other words, the Left and the ruling class worked in tandem to defeat the BSA.

In 1993, when I wrote my monograph for the Claremont Institute, the BSA had 4.3 million members. In 2020, it had half that number. Today it is down to around a million

The Scout Oath remains the same today as it did when it was published in 1911. "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; To help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

The Oath hasn't changed, but the will to operationalize it certainly has.