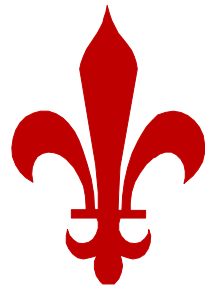


# *Anti-Discrimination Support Network*

(A committee of the Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia)



August 10, 2009

Andy Ziegler, School Board Member  
Fax: (321) 676-6074

Dear Mr. Ziegler:

Please allow me to introduce myself through this email message. I am the founder and president of the Anti-Discrimination Support Network (ADSN). ADSN is a watchdog organization established to act on complaints of discrimination against the atheist community. ADSN has tracked the activities of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) since reports of discrimination were first received in 1991.

It has come to my attention that on Tuesday, August 11, 2009, the Brevard County School Board will be discussing whether or not the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) will be allowed to hold a recruitment drive through the Brevard County public school system.

On June 28, 2000, the United States Supreme Court officially recognized BSA's claim that they are a private organization and they have the right to exclude from membership, whomever they deem. BSA continues, however, to receive special advantages, public gratuities and privileges that should only be enjoyed by an open-to-the-public organization. Being allowed into the public school system to recruit for members is one such privilege that should only be enjoyed by organizations that are open to all citizens. As a private organization, BSA prohibits atheists, homosexuals and others (disabled, autistic, etc.) from joining and volunteering.

In light of these facts, I urge each school board member to carefully consider the following:

1. Due to provisions in the United States Constitution and US Supreme Court cases, public schools are required to remain neutral with respect to religious practice and belief. If the school board approves distribution of literature from a youth group that will only accept religious, straight and able-bodied applicants, the school board is guilty of promoting discrimination. Allowing a group that openly and proudly discriminates creates an entanglement situation placing teachers and school officials as a party to discrimination practices.

2. Allowing BSA to recruit in your public schools, knowing that BSA openly discriminates is not prudent. To best protect taxpayer money from being spent on a possible discrimination lawsuit, the school board should prevent a BSA recruitment drive as a preventative measure. Tax dollars should be used to provide books and to maintain the school. Tax dollars should also be used to hire teachers and administrators who care about each and every student regardless of religion, sexual orientation or disability. If the school board does nothing to prevent discrimination, tax dollars may be wasted in the courtroom.

3. Preventing BSA from conducting a recruitment drive in the public school system of Brevard County, the Brevard County School Board can help send a message to BSA that their biased membership policy is unacceptable. School board members can take part in a stand for equal rights. Help us demand that discrimination of any sort is unwelcome. BSA must return to being an open-to-the-public organization that serves all youths and allows volunteer opportunities to all citizens regardless of religion, sexual orientation or disability or suffer the consequences.

Sincerely,

*Margaret Downey*

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