

**Capitol Hill Scouts  
Troop 500 and Venture Crew 500  
419 Fourth Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002**

February 19, 2001

**An Open Letter To The Capitol Hill Community  
and  
Friends and Families of Capitol Hill Scouts, Troop 500 and Venture Crew 500**

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As many of you may be aware over recent months there has been considerable controversy and discussion concerning the position that the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America has taken with respect to the participation of homosexuals, particularly homosexual leaders, in scouting. This very public discussion and resulting events have caused many individuals in our community to ask the leadership of Capitol Hill Scouts to not only explain the situation but also to express our position on the matter. We cannot fully address the motives of the National Council and frankly have no idea what the future will bring. After much dialogue, education and careful consideration we have chosen to write this letter in an effort to make public our thoughts and position.

**Background:**

Capitol Hill Scouts is an independently chartered, parent led scouting organization that currently sponsors Boy Scout Troop 500 and the co-ed Venture Crew 500. Capitol Hill Scouts has no specific religious or faith-based affiliation. Although meetings are held at Capitol Hill Baptist Church, and we are very grateful to the church for being our host, the church is not our sponsoring organization. Participants in our program are diverse with respect to race, religious background and preference and even gender in the case of our Venture program. As an organization we have always valued diversity and have welcomed anyone who was interested in becoming a part of the program we have to offer.

**Why We Exist:**

Capitol Hill Scouts has always valued and worked to realize what we believe to be the traditional positive goals of scouting. Among the principal goals and attributes as we see them are:

1. An opportunity to learn about and practice responsible citizenship.
2. An opportunity to acquire skills which can develop into deeply rewarding lifetime pursuits.
3. An opportunity to develop leadership skills.

4. Healthy fun.
5. A personal sense of accomplishment that comes from either the development of new skills or through formal recognition that comes from advancement and awards.

Each scout troop tends to take on a personality of its own, and Capitol Hill Scouts has been noted for its commitment to an active camping and outdoor program. In our short history we are proud of the fact that six young men have attained scouting's highest rank of Eagle Scout. Finally, we are proud of having made use of scouting's provision for co-ed programs at the venture level. Our venture program has made outdoor and camping experiences available to teenage men and women alike.

#### **Our Position:**

We find ourselves deeply troubled by the position that the BSA National Council has taken with regard to sexual orientation. As a troop that values diversity and non-discrimination we are sincerely disappointed by the National Council's selective interpretation of some of the scout laws in an effort to justify their position. We believe their interpretation of specific aspects of the scout law to foster a particular moral or political agenda is not in the best interest of scouting. Further, we are committed to operating a program that we believe is reflective of the values of our families and the community in which we live.

It has always been the position of Capitol Hill Scouts that we insist that our leaders, members and families behave in a responsible fashion. We subscribe to the National BSA policy that adults always interact with youth in pairs ("two-deep leadership") for the safety of the boys and the adults. The personal sexual preference of leaders has never been a topic of discussion in our program and we frankly question the appropriateness of such discussions. Capitol Hill Scouts is insistent that all connected with the program behave in ways that respect all concerned. Should anyone in our program behave in a way that is inappropriate, intrusive or violates the rights of others, they will no longer be involved and the appropriate actions will be taken.

#### **Our Future Intentions:**

We remain committed to the positive attributes that scouting has to offer. Our families and supporters have a considerable self-investment in scouting and for the most part believe that investment has served them well. We continue to believe that scouting has significant value and therefore will remain an officially chartered unit within the scouting movement. It is therefore our intention to take the following actions:

1. We will make our position on these issues public and known to our community and seek a meeting with the National Capital Area Council to discuss this matter.
2. We **will not** adopt a policy that discriminates against participants based on sexual orientation, race, gender or religious affiliation.

3. We will work actively with other troops and councils across the country to attempt to influence the National Council to re-think and change its policy of excluding homosexuals.
4. We will continue to sponsor and engage our youth and community at large in dialogue and educational events that promote a greater understanding, tolerance and acceptance of diversity.

Finally, we look forward to the continued support of our community, our local council and our families. We welcome your feedback, involvement and support as we strive to conduct the best program possible.

Sincerely Yours,

Capitol Hill Scouts

Rick Rutherford, Capitol Hill Scouts Institutional Representative (202 544-0916;  
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Michael McCabe, Scoutmaster Troop 500

Gary C. Barbour, Assistant Scoutmaster Troop 500

Rob Corder, Assistant Scoutmaster Troop 500 and Assistant Advisor, Venture Crew 500

Mark O'Donnell, Assistant Scoutmaster Troop 500

Merle Van Horne, Assistant Advisor, Venture Crew 500



## BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

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Office of the Chief Scout Executive

March 8, 2001

Mr. Ron L. Carroll, SE  
National Capital Area Council #82, BSA  
9190 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20814-3897

MAR 12 2001  
3/18/01  
FYI  
Ron Carroll

Dear Ron:

This letter is to acknowledge receipt in this office of the following:

- Open Letter to the Capitol Hill Community from Capitol Hill Scouts
- E-mail letter from Richard H. Crawford

Please be assured that their opinions and concerns have been shared with leadership within Scouting.

Thank you for taking the effort to send these two pieces of correspondence to our attention.

Sincerely,

Carl C. Christensen  
Administrative Assistant

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