



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## Statement by NYS Senator Hoylman on Continuation of BSA's Discrimination Policy Against Gay & Lesbian Scout Leaders

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL May 24, 2013

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### **\*\*Introduces Bill (S.5170) that Would End Tax Exempt Status for Discriminatory Youth Organizations Like the Scouts**

New York, NY —Yesterday, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) formally revised its membership standards, ending the organization's ban on gay youths, but maintaining its exclusion of gay and lesbian adult leaders.

"As the only openly-gay New York State Senator, a parent and a former Eagle Scout (Troop 70, Lewisburg, WV), I am outraged that the BSA has maintained its ban on gay adult leaders. This policy represents rank discrimination by the organization against LGBT people and is extremely painful to families like mine.

It's inconceivable that an organization that aims to prepare the next generation of leaders would allow gay youth to join their program, but deny them the opportunity to lead scout troops once adults.

Moreover, this stigma is hurtful to young people, reinforcing and legitimizing the bullying and alienation of our children that has led to tragic consequences, including violence against

members of the LGBT community.

I strongly believe that the BSA is obliged by the Constitution of the United States, longstanding state and local anti-discrimination laws and the Scout Law itself to categorically end its policy of bigotry toward gays and lesbians.

To that end, I have introduced legislation ([S.5170](#)) that would deny tax-exempt status to all youth groups that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or other defining characteristics. It has been more than ten years since New York State enacted the Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act (SONDA), and it's long past time for the BSA to comply and remove all barriers to participation based on sexual orientation."