



May 2, 2017

National President Randall L. Stephenson
Boy Scouts of America
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane
Irving, Texas 75038

Dear President Stephenson,

Thank you for your leadership of the Boy Scouts of America, a storied organization that has positively impacted the lives of countless thousands of boys in our country. The steadfast commitment to building leadership skills, as well as character, discipline, ethics and teamwork, is more important today than at any time in this distinguished organization's history, I believe.

The National Organization for Women (NOW), which since 1966 has worked to advance the rights and opportunities of women and girls, greatly admires the Boy Scouts' mission and success. I would be very grateful for the opportunity to speak with you and open a dialogue about how girls who strive to attain the highest levels of accomplishment in Scouting may benefit alongside their male cohorts here in the United States.

We commend the Boy Scouts of America's inclusive policy of welcoming transgender male scouts into all scouting programs. We very much hope that policy can be further expanded to include girls more fully. While girls are allowed into some programs, they are still excluded from joining Cub Packs or Scout Troops, joining the Boy Scout honor society, earning Merit Badges, and competing to earn the organization's highest rank – that of Eagle Rank.

As you know, the U.S. is one of the only countries in the world that does not offer the opportunity for co-ed scouting throughout a young person's scouting career. The World Organization of the Scout Movement has been greatly expanded and enriched because of its inclusion of all young people.

Eagle Scouts have access to opportunities exclusive to their rank, including admission into the National Eagle Scout Association, and eligibility for scholarships only available to Eagle Scouts. Additionally, the prestige, character building and leadership training associated with the Eagle Scout rank gives its participants a competitive edge for admission into selective colleges and is a gateway to a career in finance and other fields.

We have had the opportunity to work closely with Sydney Ireland, a sixteen-year old Scout who has been championing an inclusive policy at the Boy Scouts since she was twelve years old. She displays the conviction, character and tenacity that you look for in Eagle Scouts. Being able to achieve Eagle ranking is this young woman's goal.

However the longer it takes the Boy Scouts of America leadership to seriously look at options for expanding Scouting to girls, the less likely she will ever be able to fulfill this dream. That window will close for Sydney in the very near future.

Sydney says in her [Change.org petition](#), "I cannot change my gender to fit the Boy Scouts' standards, but the Boy Scouts can change their standards to include me. I am determined to be

National Organization for Women - New York

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an Eagle Scout. I know I could rise through the ranks and become an Eagle Scout alongside the boys – all I need is the opportunity.”

With the Boy Scouts upcoming national meeting taking place on May 24, this is an ideal time to address this issue and uphold the Boy Scouts decree “to help all children” by permitting girls to gain full membership in the Boy Scouts.

Women can now hold all combat roles in the military, and women are serving in most every top level of government, business and academia. It’s long past due that girls have equal opportunities in Scouting.

We very much look forward to speaking with you and working together to ensure the Boy Scouts of America continues to be an inclusive organization dedicated to building the next generation of leaders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonia Ossorio". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sonia Ossorio,
President, NOW New York