

**Excerpts from Testimony before the
Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity
Public Fact Finding Hearing
Regarding State Employees' Campaign Request for Declaratory Ruling Concerning
Inclusion of Boy Scouts in Charitable Giving Campaign**

April 27, 2000

David Knapp, former Boy Scout and Adult Scout Leader

On November 18, 1993...I was told that I was being dismissed from the Boy Scouts of America. The shock and trauma I experienced is beyond description. I had to press them to find out why. The answer by the Assistant Scout Executive was "because we have discovered you are a homosexual."

I feel deeply hurt and very angry because I loved the Boy Scouts, received much from it, and gave much to it – 10 years of my professional career plus my years as a junior leader and adult volunteer. I still believe it is the best youth program in the world and needed now more than ever, particular for it's [*sic*] values exemplified in the Scout Oath and Law and Good Turn.

...

There are as many gay boys in Scouting as in the general population. Can you imagine the fear, isolation, and rejection they feel? What message does this send to the heterosexual Scouts about how they should react when they suspect or find one of these fellow scouts is gay?

...

There should be little doubt that the Boy Scouts of America and the Councils in Connecticut which represent them are violating both the spirit and the letter of the Gay Rights Laws of Connecticut.

Daniel F. Duggan, State of Connecticut Employee Department of Administrative Services

As a State Employee, I believe it is a misuse of employee and taxpayer resources to process donations on the part of the United Way [which includes the Boy Scouts of America as a beneficiary]. I believe state employee resources should not be used to benefit an agency that includes organizations which discriminate.

...

I would also like to address the scout's policy at this time. As a gay male, I am offended that the scouts believe that I would not be an appropriate role model simply because I am gay. Without getting into to [*sic*] much detail, I was born into a lower income family who worked to raise themselves out of the projects. There were eight siblings, all of which are productive decent members of society. Myself and one brother were fortunate enough to attend college and earn our degrees. Many friends and family members hold us up to their children as models of what one can accomplish through hard work and commitment. It offends me that the Boy Scouts are sending the message to these same children that I am NOT a good role model, and I am not someone that they should look up to or strive to be.

Leslie J. Brett, Ph.D.,

Executive Director of the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

I would like to share with you a little bit about how this feels to me, as a lesbian state employee who relies on the protection of the statute which states I will not be discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation, the state will not permit the use of any of its facilities in furtherance of such discrimination, nor will it be party to any plan or arrangement which has the effect of sanctioning discrimination.

...

[H]ow my employer treats the issue of exclusion and discrimination – especially when my employer is no less a significant public entity than the State of Connecticut itself – is not a small matter at all. When the annual State Employee Campaign comes along, I immediately feel that this activity – so valued and elevated by those around me – is not meant for me. In fact, it not only excludes me in some way, it denigrates who I am. Here, in this booklet handed out by my employer, is the listing – no less than fourteen times – for an organization that openly, unapologetically excludes people who are gay. And they do so for the most prejudiced of reasons – the assertion that gay people do not have the moral character suitable for their organization.

...

I know the State of Connecticut never intended to condone or promote discrimination of any kind through the State Employees' Campaign and I applaud the Committee for addressing this issue by seeking a ruling from the Commission. As we all know, *passing* laws to protect our civil rights is only the first step – applying the law in order to eliminate discriminatory practices is the long, hard work that follows. I hope the CHRO will find that the inclusion of the Boy Scouts in the State Employees' Annual Campaign is a clear violation of our laws in Connecticut and should not be allowed to continue. Thank you.