

## 1 Introduction

The MDSC National Membership Standards Review Committee was formed by MDSC President Lou Paulson and chartered to (1.) understand the views of MDSC membership related to the topic of BSA's national membership policy and (2.) based on that understanding form and present a recommendation to the MDSC board regarding BSA's national membership standards.

### 1.1 Members

	Larry Abramson, Co-Chair	
	Anne O'Neal, Co-Chair	
Alex Bergtraun		Mike Peterson
Len Bjeldanes		Chuck Smith
John Fenoglio		Jim Teare
Jonnie Hagan		Brian Thiessen
Stephen Israel		Matt Westphal

## 2 Data gathering process

The committee debated numerous data gathering techniques including the hiring of a professional firm to survey our membership. Ultimately we concluded that utilizing an internet based survey tool would suit our purposes.

### 2.1 Determination of who would be surveyed

After some debate the committee agreed to survey the following groups within our council: Scouts, Scouters, Parents, Chartered Organizations Representatives, and Executive Board Members. The committee then charged the MDSC professional staff to provide us with email addresses for the selected groups.

### 2.2 Additions to the survey list

A process was established by which qualified voters could be added to the list. An email alias was established and maintained by the MDSC professional staff. Any member of our council could email that address and request access to the survey. The professional staff was charge with verifying that the additions were qualified members of our council in one of the qualified categories. Duplicate email additions were eliminated by our survey software.

### 2.3 Number of surveys distributed

Ultimately 5,011 Surveys were distributed via email to members of the council. 42.2% of those asked responded submitting 2,166 completed surveys. The distribution of responses documented in this report has remained consistent since the number of survey response passed 500. There has been no material change in the distribution of response since that time.

## 2.4 Number of responses by district

<b>Mt. Diablo Silverado Council Membership Standards Survey</b>		
<b>Which district do you belong to?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Aklan	16.6%	355
Chief Solano	4.1%	88
Diablo Sunrise	9.1%	195
Herms	8.0%	171
Iron Horse	10.4%	223
Lake	0.7%	14
Meridian	13.4%	286
Muir	5.6%	119
Silverado	32.1%	685
<i>answered question</i>		<b>2136</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>30</b>

## 2.5 Number of responses by stakeholder group

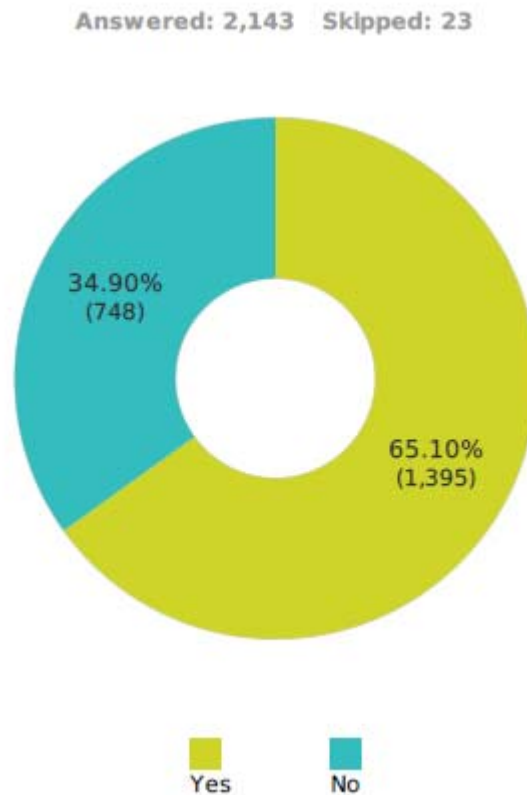
<b>Mt. Diablo Silverado Council Membership Standards Survey</b>		
<b>Are you a (Scout, Parent, Unit leader, Committee Member, Chartered Organization Rep, Council Board Member, Other Leader)</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Scout	4.6%	99
Parent	33.7%	726
Unit leader	27.7%	597
Committee Member	20.0%	432
Chartered Organization Rep	3.9%	83
Council Board Member	1.4%	31
Other Leader	8.7%	187
<i>answered question</i>		<b>2155</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>11</b>

### 3 Summary of findings

#### 3.1 Question 1.

Our first question asked for a Yes or No response related to the exact wording of the national BSA membership policy. Our intent was to be sure that our members were aware of the exact wording, as opposed to hearsay or media reports, and to then ask them “Do you believe national policy should be changed to include LGBT(Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) individuals?”

The response was:

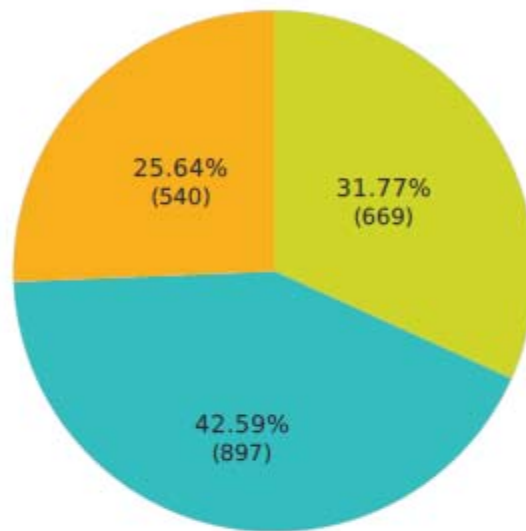


We intentionally made no comment in our question related to the type of change. We simply ask do you believe membership policy should be changed to allow LGBT individuals in Scouting. 34.9% said no. 65.1% said yes.

### 3.2 Question 2

In question two we introduced a variable to see if the groups that supported Yes or No in question 1 would modify their position if an option existed where Chartered Organizations had the ability to set membership standards consistent with their individual organizational policies. In this question we asked, "The BSA national board of directors is considering a policy change which, rather than a national policy excluding "open or avowed homosexuals," would move the decision to include or exclude LGBT individuals to individual sponsoring organizations. Each BSA Unit has a sponsoring organization such as a church, synagogue, or community service organization. Do you:"

Answered: 2,106 Skipped: 60



Legend:

- Light Green: Agree that this decision should be made by sponsoring organizations.
- Teal: Believe that this decision should be made nationally for all sponsoring organizations.
- Orange: Disagree with changing the policy regarding LGBT individuals

When presented with the 'choice' option, the percent of our members that disagreed with a change in membership policy moved from 34.90%, in the Yes or No question, to 25.64%. The 'choice' option also affected those members voting to include LGBT individuals with the numbers moving from 65.1%, in the Yes or No question, to 74.4%.

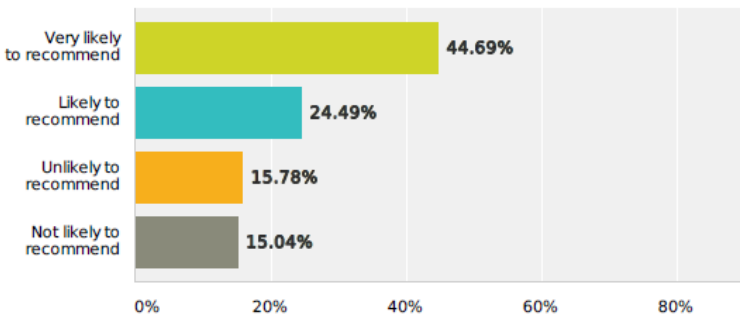
### 3.3 Question 3 & 4

In question 3 and 4 we wanted to understand the impact of the membership standard on member’s willingness to recommend Scouting to a friend. In question 3 we asked, “How likely are you to recommend Scouting to a friend if the current LGBT policy does not change?” and in question four we asked the opposite, “How likely are you to recommend Scouting to a friend if the current LGBT policy does change?”

The result was:

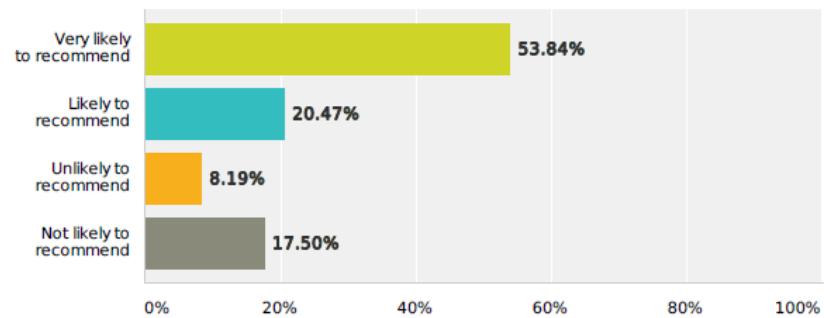
#### Q3 How likely are you to recommend Scouting to a friend if the current LGBT policy does not change?

Answered: 2,148 Skipped: 18



#### Q4 How likely are you to recommend Scouting to a friend if the current LGBT policy does change?

Answered: 2,149 Skipped: 17



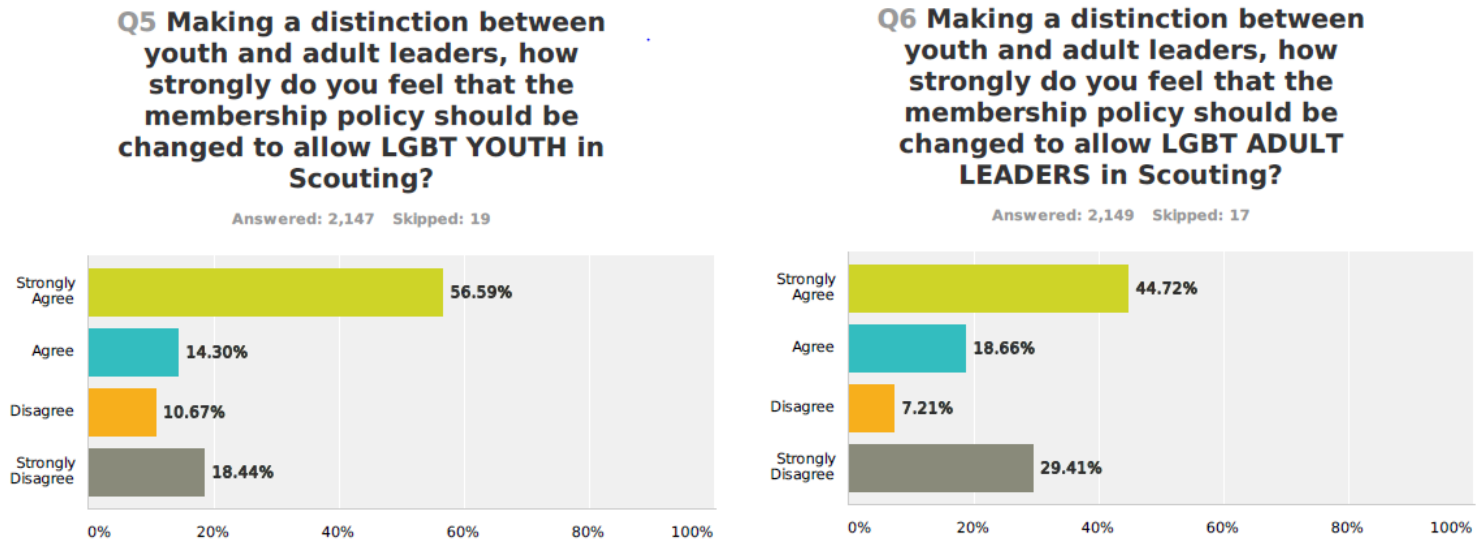
69.2% of our members are likely or very likely to recommend Scouting to a friend if the policy does not change. If the policy does change then that number rises to 74.3%

Conversely 30.8% of our members are unlikely or very unlikely to recommend Scouting to a friend if the policy does not change. If the policy does change, that number falls to 25.7%

### 3.4 Question 5 & 6

In questions 5 and 6 we wanted to see if our members had views that were different, in any meaningful way, between LGBT Scouts and LGBT Scouters. In these questions we asked, “Making a distinction between youth and adult leaders, how strongly do you feel that the membership policy should be changed to allow LGBT YOUTH in Scouting?” In question 6 we asked, “Making a distinction between youth and adult leaders, how strongly do you feel that the membership policy should be changed to allow LGBT ADULT LEADERS in Scouting?”

The result was:



In the case of LGBT youth, 70.9% of our members agree or strongly agree that they should be allowed in Scouting. 29.1% of our members disagree, or strongly disagree, that LGBT youth should be allowed in Scouting.

In the case of LGBT adults, 63.4% of our members agree or strongly agree that they should be allowed in Scouting. 36.6% of our members disagree, or strongly disagree, that LGBT adult leaders should be allowed in Scouting.

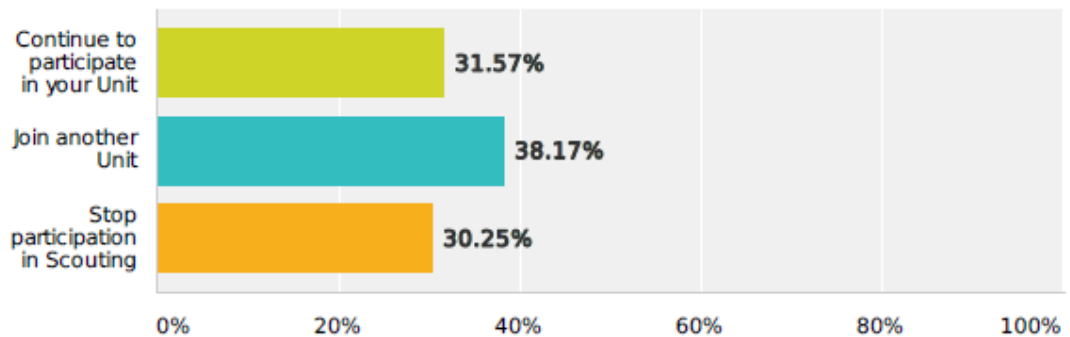
### 3.5 Question 7

In question 7 we wanted to understand what our members would likely do if their Unit had a membership policy that they disagreed with. So we asked, “If your Unit (Pack, Troop, Team, Crew, Ship) had a membership policy regarding LGBT individuals that you disagreed with, would you:”

The results were:

#### Q7 If your Unit (Pack, Troop, Team, Crew, Ship) had a membership policy regarding LGBT individuals that you disagreed with, would you:

Answered: 2,122 Skipped: 44



69.8% of our members said they would continue to participate in Scouting, with 38.2 % indicating that they would join another troop. 30.25% of our members said they would stop participation in Scouting.

### **3.6 Question 8**

Question 8 was an open ended question where we simply asked our members, “Please tell us, in your opinion, what is the most important thing we could do to improve Scouting for our community?”

The complete list of all responses can be found in the Addendum, section I - MDSC Council Survey Response, Question 8. We found this input to be quite helpful and in many cases inspiring.

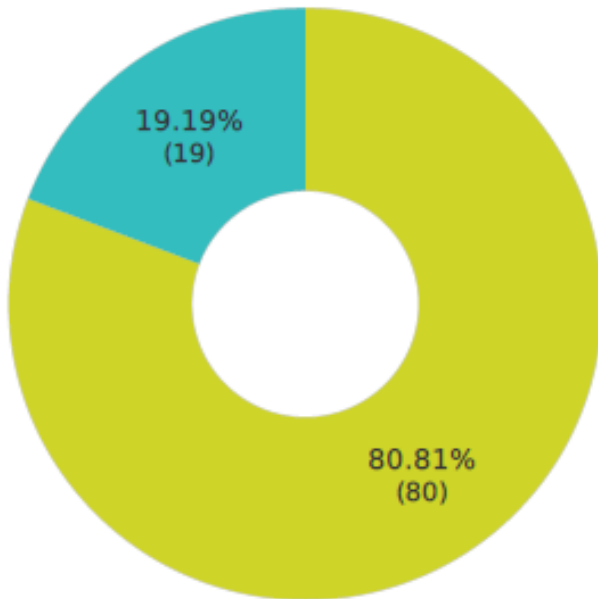
### **3.7 Question 9, 10, 11 & 12**

These were filtering questions which enabled our committee to analyze the data with more detail. We’ve sorted the survey by some of these filters and provided it to you in the Addendum.

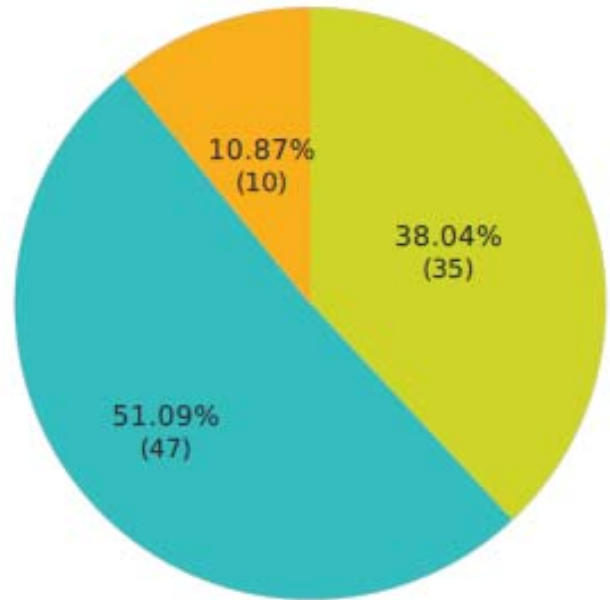


#### 4 The Scout's View

When looked at as a separate group, the Scouts in our district support the inclusion of LGBT individuals 81%



Yes No



Agree that this decision should be made by sponsoring organizations.  
Believe that this decision should be made nationally for all sponsoring organizations.  
Disagree with changing the policy regarding LGBT individuals.

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If their chartering organizations are given a choice of including LGBT individuals consistent with their individual organizational policies the Scouts support inclusion of LGBT individuals by 89%

## 5 Recommendations

Given that the national board may evolve their view on this matter, our committee does not believe that the MDSC board should vote on the current proposed changes to national BSA's membership standard. Rather we believe the MDSC board should vote to support a set of principles that represent the views of the majority of our members. Further, we believe our board should vote to advocate for these principles. Finally we believe our board should vote to encourage our national board representatives to vote in a manner consistent with these principles.

### 5.1 Membership Standard Principles that represent the majority opinion of the MDSC

Given the work of the committee, the findings from our survey, and our debates and discussions, we recommend the adoption of the following principles:

- A. Scouts and Scouters should be judged by their conduct, their actions, and their character, consistent with the Scout Oath and Scout Law, not by stereotypes or group related prejudices.
- B. The Scout Oath and the Scout Law are foundational ideas that every person should be exposed to so that all people can benefit from the Scouting movement's principles, ideals, and values.
- C. Regardless of sexual orientation, sexual topics and conduct, which include pointing out another individual's sexual orientation, are not part of the Scouting movement and should not be tolerated. Further, the Scouting movement should not permit its organization to be used as a vehicle to promote any personal, political, social or other objective that is inconsistent with the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- D. The results of the MDSC Membership Standards Survey and the discussions of our committee have reaffirmed the role that the Scouting Movement has had and can continue to have in shaping the lives and values of young people. However the current BSA membership policy clearly excludes an entire group based on a presumption of behavior rather than on the actions of individuals. Excluding an entire group of people based on stereotypes and prejudices is inconsistent with the Scout Oath and Scout Law. The current membership policy is of deep concern to many in the Mt. Diablo Silverado Council for its potential to undermine the future vitality of the Scouting movement.
- E. Chartered Organizations have always and will continue to create Scouting Units that are consistent with their organizational faiths, standards and deeply held beliefs. However, we believe that the national BSA board should not pass this important decision from BSA's governing body to Chartered Organizations. Rather, we believe that the national board should adopt a standard policy, consistent with the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and the principles documented within this report, which ends the isolation and exclusion of LGBT individuals.

**5.2 Motion to support the principles defined in section 5.1 above and which represent the majority opinion of our members.**

The board of the Mt. Diablo Silverado Council approves the membership principles, as defined by the MDSC National Membership Standards Review Committee in their report of findings submitted to the MDSC board on March 16, 2013.

**5.3 Motion to advocate for these principles.**

The board of the Mt. Diablo Silverado Council authorizes its Scout Executive, its President and its Executive Committee to advocate for these principles.

**5.4 Motion to encourage our national board representatives to vote in a manner consistent with these principles.**

In recognition that the National Board of the Boy Scouts of America may vote on one or more items related to its membership standards, the MDSC board instructs its National representative to tender their votes in a manner consistent with the principles stated within this report.