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## **Boy Scouts of America Provides Overview, Context to Youth Protection Program and Ineligible Volunteer Files**

**(IRVING, TX—October 17, 2012)**—The Boy Scouts of America is responding today to the release by a Portland-based attorney of its ineligible volunteer files from 1965 to 1985. Established more than 80 years ago, the files are a key method used to keep Scouts safe. Essentially, the files are a list of people who do not meet the BSA’s membership standards because of known or suspected abuse or other inappropriate conduct either inside or outside of Scouting.

### **Statement From Wayne Perry, National President, Boy Scouts of America:**

“There have been instances where people misused their positions in Scouting to abuse children, and in certain cases, our response to these incidents and our efforts to protect youth were plainly insufficient, inappropriate, or wrong. Where those involved in Scouting failed to protect, or worse, inflicted harm on children, we extend our deepest and sincere apologies to victims and their families.

“While it is difficult to understand or explain individuals’ actions from many decades ago, today Scouting is a leader among youth-serving organizations in preventing child abuse. The BSA requires background checks; administers comprehensive training programs for volunteers, staff, youth, and parents; and mandates reporting of even suspected abuse. We have continuously enhanced our multitiered policies and procedures to ensure we are in line with and, where possible, ahead of society’s knowledge of abuse and best practices for prevention. The BSA’s standards and relentless focus on Youth Protection have been recognized and praised by experts in child protection, including Victor Vieth, a former prosecutor who heads the National Child Protection Training Center.

“Experts have found that the BSA’s system of ineligible volunteer files functions well to help protect Scouts by denying entry to potentially dangerous individuals, and Scouting believes they play an important role in our comprehensive Youth Protection system.”

### **Youth Protection and the Role of the Ineligible Volunteer (IV) Files:**

Ineligible volunteer files exist solely to help the BSA remove and keep out unfit individuals whose actions are inconsistent with the standards of Scouting. Of the 1,247 Ineligible Volunteer Files now being released, in most cases, the police, courts and public were aware of the information in the files. For example, police were involved in nearly two-thirds (63%) of the files and a majority of these files (58%) included information known to the public. During this era, Scouting served approximately 5 million youth and adult members each year.

Today, any adult who wants to join Scouting must pass a criminal background check, but the BSA began collecting information on those ineligible to be volunteers decades before computers and other electronic databases were available.

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The files are kept confidential by Scouting because the BSA believes that confidentiality encourages prompt reporting of abuse. However, their existence as part of the BSA's Youth Protection efforts is well-known and publicly acknowledged.

In 2007, the Centers for Disease Control recognized that the creation of such a list of individuals who should not be involved with an organization is a best practice for youth-serving organizations. These files continue to play a role in Scouting's multilayered approach to Youth Protection.

### **Previous and Future Independent Reviews of the Files**

Scouting commissioned a review of IV files by Dr. Janet Warren, a professor of psychiatry and neurobehavioral sciences at the University of Virginia. Dr. Warren also sits on the Research Advisory Board of the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime.

Dr. Warren's report shows that while in some instances the BSA failed to defend Scouts from those who would do them harm, as part of our broader Youth Protection program, the BSA's system of ineligible volunteer files helps protect Scouts. Many of the files show men attempting to re-enter the Scouting program and being denied re-entry because their names were on an IV file.

Additional findings include:

- The files are incomplete records of events that happened years ago. These files tell us precisely what researchers already knew and have known for many years: Some small number of men will use a position of trust and access to young people to pursue illegal sexual gratification.
- The reported rates of sexual abuse in Scouting have been very low and broadly refute the notion that these were "secret files" of hidden abuse. The files show a significant amount of public knowledge of the offenders and their unlawful acts.
- While the BSA's IV file system is not perfect, and mistakes clearly occurred, the system has functioned well in its goal of keeping many unfit adults out of Scouting.

The BSA will undertake a similar review and analysis of the IV files and will report all good-faith suspicions of abuse that have not been reported to law enforcement (1965 to present day).

### **The BSA's Current Youth Protection Policies:**

While these files focus on issues from 1965 to 1985, today the program focuses on effective screening, education and training, and clear policies to protect youth.

- The BSA has continuously enhanced our policies and procedures to ensure we are in line with and, where possible, ahead of society's knowledge of abuse and best practices for prevention.

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- The BSA requires background checks, local screening of volunteers, comprehensive training programs, and mandatory reporting of even suspected abuse.
- Under today’s policies, any good-faith suspicion of abuse must be immediately reported to law enforcement by members and volunteers, and an individual is removed from Scouting as soon as a report is received.
- Scouting’s two-deep leadership policy requires at least two adults to be present for all Scouting activities. No youth should ever be alone with a Scout leader for any reason. In fact, all Scouting activities are open to parents, and we encourage families to enjoy Scouting together.
- Every Boy Scout and Cub Scout handbook includes a pamphlet to help parents teach their children how to recognize, resist, and report abuse.
- The BSA has a Youth Protection director dedicated to the continued enhancement of Scouting’s training programs and policies.

Numerous independent experts have recognized that the education and training programs protecting Scouts today are among the best in the youth-serving community. For a graphic that explains Scouting’s multilayered Youth Protection policies and procedures, click [here](#).

**Third-Party Experts and the BSA’s Youth Protection Policies:**

Associated Press, January 2012 [\[click here for story\]](#)

- The Scouts’ current prevention policies are considered state of the art...
- Several independent child-protection experts told The Associated Press that the Scouts—though buffeted in the past by many abuse-related lawsuits—are now considered a leader in combating sexual abuse...
- “The Boy Scouts have the most advanced policies and training,” said Victor Vieth, a former prosecutor who heads the National Child Protection Training Center in Minnesota...
- Prevention efforts have intensified in the past 30 years, with the Scouts prohibiting one-on-one adult-youth activities, mandating criminal background checks for all staff who work with youth, and including an insert for parents about child protection in the handbook issued to new Scouts...

MSNBC, November 2011 [\[click here for story\]](#)

- The Boy Scouts of America is one group advocates say has gone farthest to institute such measures to safeguard kids.

NPR, November 2011 [[click here for story](#)]

- “In fact, the Boy Scouts are one of the organizations who’ve done a great deal of work to turn around that public perception, to turn around some of the policies that were not helpful for kids. They’ve instituted a great deal of training. They’ve instituted no one-on-one interactions with kids. They have completely open programs, which doesn’t allow secrets anymore, and they tell everybody who comes in contact with kids that youth protection begins with you. We have to institute those kinds of training programs and policies within organizations, and we need to back that up with ongoing training.”

—Amy Russell, Deputy Director of the National Child Protection Training Center

### **The Files in Litigation and Their Subsequent Coverage in the Media**

In 2010, a set of IV files from the years 1965 to 1985 was introduced into evidence in a State of Oregon court case. Subsequently, media sued for the release of the files, and the Oregon Supreme Court upheld a lower court’s order to release the files to the public. Plaintiff’s counsel is now releasing those files publicly. In addition, some media have in recent weeks examined a similar set of IV files from 1970 to 1991 that were produced during litigation in California in 1991. The majority of the files produced for these two cases, those from 1970 to 1985, are identical due to the overlap in years requested by the courts.

### **Additional Information and Interviews**

Additional media information on Scouting’s Youth Protection policies is available at [www.bsayouthprotection.org](http://www.bsayouthprotection.org).

Recent broadcast interviews of Wayne Perry, National President, and Mike Johnson, National Youth Protection Director, are available to affiliates. The interviews are:

- **Confidential Files Document Child Abusers in Boy Scouts**  
KENS5—WFAA.com  
October 15, 2012  
Link: <http://www.kens5.com/news/national/174450091.html>
- **Scout President: Mistakes Were Made In Confidential Files**  
CBS News—Dallas/Fort Worth  
October 15, 2012  
Link: <http://dfw.cbslocal.com/2012/10/15/scout-president-mistakes-were-made-in-confidential-files/>

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- **Boy Scouts of America Talking Publicly About Past Abuse**  
NBC News—Dallas/Fort Worth  
October 15, 2012  
Link: <http://www.nbcdfw.com/news/Boy-Scouts-Of-America-Talking-Publicly-About-Abuse--174294141.html>
- **BSA Committed to Youth Protection as Sex Abuse Files Released**  
FOX News—Dallas/Fort Worth  
October 15, 2012  
Link: <http://www.myfoxdfw.com/story/19825316/boy-scouts-committed-to-youth-protection-as-sex-abuse-files-released>

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