

Matt Hill  
March 8, 2005

Public Comment to the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education  
6:00pm  
WS/FCS Administration Center

Chairman Lambeth, Superintendent Martin, Members of the School Board: My name is Matt Hill, a 2004 graduate of R.J. Reynolds High School and currently a freshman at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I have three younger siblings enrolled in this school system, with another starting kindergarten next school year. One of my little brothers will be attending a field trip with his school to the Old Hickory Council, Boy Scouts of America Camp Raven Knob in a few weeks. While in school, I also went to the camp in a Boy Scout program called Learning for Life. The school system partners with the Old Hickory Council in providing this program to students.

Although the Boy Scouts of America has accomplished many great works of public service, they also have accomplished hurting not only youth in our own community, but also youth across the nation. As a former Scout kicked out of the Scouting program for being gay, I know first-hand the hurt that is caused by the Boy Scouts of America. I do not believe that the school system should be partnering with an organization that openly discriminates against gay and atheist youth. It is shameful, unethical, and immoral.

I ask that the Board of Education step up and do its job in representing the people of our community and discontinue its partnership with the Old Hickory Council. By allowing the Boy Scouts of America to provide programming within the schools, you are justifying their discriminatory policies that only serve to hurt youth. By allowing the Boy Scouts to recruit within our schools without telling parents or children about their membership

policies while doing so, you are setting up children for rejection and abuses to their own self-esteem and self-image. Would our school system let an organization that discriminated on the basis of race or ethnicity provide programming within our schools or recruit within our schools? I think not. Likewise, the school system should not let the Boy Scouts of America, which discriminates on the basis of sexual orientation and religion, provide their programming within our schools or allow them to recruit on public school property. The School Board's job is to protect children and youth, as well as educate them. Please stop partnering with an organization that discriminates against and hurts the youth of our community.