

**22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Governor's Luncheon for Scouting**  
**Governor Eric J. Holcomb**  
**December 18, 2017**

*Remarks as prepared for delivery*

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Thanks, Ed, and thanks to all of you who put this luncheon together.

I also want to congratulate Patrick Sterrett for his promotion to COO of the national Boy Scouts and welcome Joe Wiltout as our new Scout Executive.

Good afternoon.

I've really been looking forward to this event – for the chance to address *the* Boy Scout group that increased membership more than any other in the country, and also to be part of what is largest single fundraiser for Boy Scouts in the country.

That all of you are here – who represent the heart of our Central Indiana community – says it all.

You know that Boy Scouts are more than hiking and camping and fishing – as important as those are. They're about character, community and country.

And that's what I want to talk about.

“Heroes start here!” You couldn't have chosen a better theme.

The Boy Scouts have been developing heroes, leaders and citizens for more than 100 years.

Former Scouts have worked in the Oval Office and halls of Congress, led major businesses and universities and philanthropies, made major discoveries and walked on the moon.

Each of them took their *first* steps to leadership in the Boy Scouts.

What they learned was less about following a magnetic compass, and more about following a moral compass.

That is the essence of the Boy Scouts: they develop heroes and leaders by instilling the character and values that are the wellsprings of leadership.

Unfortunately, these days, those wellsprings are in danger of drying up. At the least, they're experiencing a severe drought.

We see it on the sidelines of too many sporting events – not among the kids but among the parents.

We see it on college campuses, where some try to shut up or shout down those with whom they disagree.

We see it in the harassment and mistreatment of our neighbors.

And – a big sore point with me – we see it increasingly in our politics.

There's too much shouting, not enough listening.

Too much finger-pointing and tearing down, not enough finding common cause and working towards common solutions.

Too many politicians reflexively saying an idea can have no value because it comes from an "R" or a "D."

This my way or the highway, take-no-prisoners approach is both dangerous and counterproductive.

It prevents us from making progress on the many real issues we need to tackle – whether as a state or a country.

President Lincoln warned us nearly 160 years ago, when he said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

Now, I don't presume the eloquence of Abe Lincoln – and solving today's divisions might even task *his* genius.

But if I can make a modest suggestion: there's an essential value to and for bringing people together, a value fundamental for anyone who wants to be a hero or leader, and we need to recover it.

It's *civility*.

Civility doesn't mean we put all our differences aside.

But it demands that we listen to and respect people, their ideas and different points of view other than our own.

An organization called The Institute for Civility in Government provides a good definition.

They say: *“Civility is about disagreeing without disrespect, seeking common ground as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening past one’s preconceptions and teaching others to do the same.”*

There’s another definition I like – even though it doesn’t explicitly use the word “civility.”

It’s the Boy Scout Law. It goes like this – and if you know it, you’re welcome to join in:

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent.

Think about those characteristics. Virtually every one has meaning only in relation to other people.

You’re not trustworthy or loyal or helpful to yourself – but to others. Friendly, courteous, kind – same thing.

We tend to think of bravery as a personal attribute – and it can be – but the most powerful examples of bravery involve serving or saving others.

My point is, you can’t obey the Boy Scout Law and be uncivil. It’s impossible.

Embedded in those values is being open to another’s point of view, hearing people out, being tolerant and treating with respect even ideas with which you might disagree.

And, civility isn’t just an end in itself, it’s about forging a team, taking advantage of diverse talents and ideas, being effective and getting things done.

Vigorous debate over tough issues doesn’t make us weaker. It makes us stronger. It’s essential for finding the best path forward.

It’s no coincidence that the motto of the most successful country in history – *our* country – is *e pluribus unum* – *“Out of many, one.”*

The more we live by that creed – the more we can unite people – the greater our chances of continuing the progress that has been the hallmark of our state and our country for more than 200 years.

That's not just because life is better when you're not trying to tear each other down – but to be effective, to bring Indiana to the Next Level, requires everybody digging in.

The Scoutmaster Minute says the best way to teach a lesson is with a story.

As an old Navy man, I want to share a story from Admiral William McRaven – a Navy SEAL and former head of the U.S. Special Operations Command.

In a commencement address at the University of Texas, Admiral McRaven shares 10 lessons from SEAL training that can help someone change the world.

One is the importance of working well with others.

He describes how during training at the naval base in San Diego, students are divided into boat crews.

A crew is seven students – three on each side of a small rubber dinghy and a coxswain to help guide them.

Every day, the crews had to paddle through the surf off San Diego and then continue for several miles.

To Scouts, that probably sounds like fun – except the surf is cold and gets as high as ten feet.

Here's how the Admiral describes it: *“It's exceedingly difficult to paddle through the plunging surf unless everyone digs in.*

*“Every paddle must be synchronized to the stroke count of the coxswain, everyone must exert equal effort, or the boat will turn against the wave and be unceremoniously dumped back on the beach.*

*For the boat to make it to its destination, everyone must paddle. You can't change the world alone – you will need some help.*

*To get from your starting point to your destination takes friends, colleagues, the good will of strangers, and a strong coxswain to guide you.*

*If you want to change the world, find someone to help you paddle.”*

Boy Scouts, if you want to be a hero or a leader, find someone to help you paddle.

That's where civility comes in. If you're civil, you'll increase your chances of finding friends and allies and mentors and partners who will help you succeed.

That holds whether you're trying to earn an Eagle Scout patch, or change a state for the better.

In Scouting, in Indiana and in the United States of America, we're all in the same boat.

Like many of you here today, I believe a key to achieving goals is focus.

That's why, as Governor, I'm focusing on five pillars I believe we need to take Indiana to the Next Level.

But I'm convinced that these goals will remain elusive unless we have as many people as possible digging in and paddling together.

*So, I'm going to make respect for others – civility – an unofficial sixth pillar.*

I'm going to demand civility of those I work with, of Hoosier legislators of both parties, and of myself. And if you ever think I've crossed a line, call me out.

The issues we face are too important. The stakes are too high. And there's not a moment – or an idea – to lose.

Being civil towards each other will not erase our differences. But it may help us keep our compass pointed not to what divides us – but to solving our common problems.

Earlier, I quoted from Lincoln's House Divided speech. It's worth remembering that he gave that speech during his campaign for senator of Illinois – a race he lost.

After, he said: *"I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true."*

Boy Scouts, if you want to be a hero or a leader, stay true to the Boy Scout Oath, to the Boy Scout Law – and stay true to yourself.

When you come across people with ideas different than your own, don't dismiss them. Hear them out. Be civil.

You will be the stronger for it.

And so will we.

Thank you, thank you very much.

One last thing. While I have the floor, I want to recognize “Mr. Civility” himself – Ed Bonach.

Under Ed’s leadership, CNO has become a great corporate citizen in central Indiana.

Ed *personally* is also major contributor to the city and state, serving in high-profile leadership roles for a number of community organizations, including the Boy Scouts Crossroads of American Council.

Indianapolis and Indiana are better places because of Ed’s contributions.

Ed, I’m honored to present you with a Sagamore of the Wabash – given to Hoosiers who have provided distinguished service to our state – the kind you exemplify.

And, once again, thanks to the Boy Scouts and all of you for your strong support.

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