

Girl Scouts Sue Boy Scouts for Causing Confusion With Gender Neutral Rebranding



Girl Scouts practice placing orders using Digital Cookie, a new addition to the Girl Scout Cookie Program. in this undated handout picture. | (PHOTO: REUTERS/GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA)

The Girl Scouts of the United States of America has slapped the Boy Scouts of America with a federal trademark lawsuit alleging that the organization's gender-neutral rebranding campaign, pushing a plan to start admitting girls in 2019, is creating confusion and will "marginalize" the female organization and "erode its core brand identity."

The lawsuit filed Tuesday in Manhattan federal court comes six months after the BSA announced a plan to drop the word "boy" from the name of their older youth program to help make sure "all youth are welcome," including girls.

In their lawsuit, the Girl Scouts are seeking to block the Boy Scouts from using the term "Scout," "Scouts," "Scouting" or "Scouts BSA" without an "inherently distinctive or distinguishing term appearing immediately before it."

"Since BSA's announcement that it would admit girls to its core programs, GSUSA's fears about the damage that would be caused to its trademarks and the mission those trademarks symbolize have been realized," the complaint alleges, according to a Bloomberg report.

"Throughout the country, families, schools and communities have been told that GSUSA and BSA have merged, or even that GSUSA no longer exists. Parents interested in signing up for Girl Scouts programs have instead mistakenly signed up for the new girls' programs offered by BSA," the complaint continues.

The Girl Scouts argue in the lawsuit that the Boy Scouts of America had no right under New York State and federal law to use words like "scouts" or "scouting" by themselves "in connection with services offered to girls, or to rebrand itself as

‘the Scouts. ‘”

The rebranding, the organization argues, according to MarketWatch, sends a false message that the Boy Scouts are now the exclusive organization providing leadership development services to girls.

The Boy Scouts insist however that there is room for both organizations to co-exist.

“We applaud every organization that builds character and leadership in children, including the Girl Scouts of the USA, and believe that there is an opportunity for both organizations to serve girls and boys in our communities,” a spokeswoman for Boy Scouts of America told MarketWatch.

The Boy Scouts also noted in a statement to Bloomberg that they decided to extend their programs to girls “after years of requests from families who wanted the option of the BSA’s character- and leadership-development programs for their children — boys and girls.”

The lawsuit’s claims include trademark infringement and alleged interference with economic prospects, according to MarketWatch.

In their announcement in May, the Boy Scouts explained that the name change was part of an overall recruitment campaign called “Scout Me In.” It is the first Boy Scouts recruitment campaign to feature girls in the promotional materials.

“The Scout Me In campaign celebrates the BSA’s expansion to serve families and welcome girls and boys into Scouting in communities across the country,” the organization said at the time. “It reinforces that the mission and core values in the Scout Oath and Scout Law are welcoming, inclusive and foundational for both young men and women.”

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