



TOP STORY

Local Scout's father calls Trump speech regrettable; activists hit headquarters with signs reading 'Hitler Youth'

[RILEY JOHNSON Lincoln Journal Star](#) Jul 27, 2017

A Lincoln Boy Scout was awed witnessing President Donald Trump's controversial speech to thousands of Scouts on Monday, even as his father wished the commander-in-chief would have steered clear of partisan politics.

"I regret the fact that the man just can't help himself sometimes," said Corey Viehl, whose son George was one of 36 local Scouts at the National Scout Jamboree in West Virginia.



In this Monday, July 24, 2017 file photo, President Donald Trump waves to the crowd after speaking at the 2017 National Scout Jamboree in Glen Jean, W.Va. On Thursday, July 27, 2017, Chief Scout Executive Michael Surbaugh released a statement apologizing to members of the scouting community who were offended by the aggressive political rhetoric in the president's speech three days earlier. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

He braced for his 12-year-old to hear much worse from the lightning-rod president.

Critics have slammed the speech before the nonpartisan organization, which teaches civic engagement to the boys, among other lessons.

In the speech that drew cheers from the crowd, Trump talked of killing Obamacare, likened Washington to a "cesspool," bragged of his electoral victory and derided the media as "fake news."



George Viehl poses in front of President Kennedy's Air Force One plane at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Dayton, Ohio, during the Lincoln

On Thursday, Boy Scouts of America Chief Executive Mike Surbaugh apologized to Scouts who may have been offended by the speech.

The Scouts' invitation to Trump follows tradition dating to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and doesn't represent an endorsement of a party or its policies, Surbaugh said.

Chris Blum of the Cornhusker Council of the Boy Scouts of America said he supported the apology.

"We do not write the president's speech," Blum said.

Trump's remarks aside, the speech represented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the boys to see and hear from their country's leader, Blum said.

It was also a lesson in America's free speech protections, he said.

"I feel fortunate that we live in a country that our president will give up his time to come out and speak," Blum said.

George Viehl was elated to have watched the president speak and witness the spectacle of it all, his father said. The Scouts are set to return home later this week.

George knows little of Trump's policies, other than his desire to build a wall on the Mexican border, Corey Viehl said.

When Corey Viehl was a Boy Scout, he also attended the national jamboree. But President Bill Clinton did not come to speak, he said.

"At 12 years old I didn't give a rip about politics, but it would have been nice to see the president in person," he said.

It's not his son's first exposure to politicians, as George has heard from Nebraska Rep. Jeff Fortenberry and others in Scout lessons on civics. Through that education Scouts are exposed to a variety of differing viewpoints, Corey Viehl said.

Still, he worries Trump may have opened a door for future presidents to turn the speaking opportunity into a political rally.



Unknown activists from the group Betsy Riot posted signs reading "Boy Scouts or Hitlerjugend?" which refers to "Hitler Youth," outside the Cornhusker Council of the Boy Scouts of America headquarters in Walton late Monday, according to the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office. (Courtesy photo)

"Sometimes politicians can't resist," he said. "Why show up and give a vanilla speech to 35,000 boys?"

Following Trump's speech, the Cornhusker Council, based in Walton, and other Scout troops' headquarters nationwide were targeted with signs calling Scouts "Hitler Youth."

Lancaster County Sheriff's Office investigators believe the signs, which read "Boy Scouts or Hitlerjugend?" and "Be prepared ... to resist facism," were posted late Monday by the activist group Betsy Riot, according to an incident report and the group's Facebook page.

The Hitler Youth was a Nazi education program under Adolf Hitler in the 1930s.

In social media posts this week, the Betsy Riot called on the Boy Scouts to denounce Trump.

Blum said the signs were an unfortunate attack on the organization.

But, he said, "they have no effect on how Scouting is going to operate to deliver life-changing experiences for kids."

Betsy Riot's signs are disappointing, Corey Viehl said, considering the amount of work Scouts do for their community.

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