

KNOW THE FACTS:

RUMORS THAT SURFACE DURING GIRL SCOUT COOKIE SEASON

There are incorrect rumors about Girl Scouts that tend to resurface during cookie season when we are most visible to the public. These are not the topics we want to focus on as it takes away from the girls and their positive learning experience. However, volunteers and parents/caregivers need to be informed to avoid feeling caught off guard if approached by a misinformed customer.

Please prepare by reviewing the facts and our official statements. Following are the most recent and most recurring topics. There's even more on cookies, social issues, and financials available at girlscoutsaz.org/forthecord.

FREQUENT QUESTIONS AND MISPERCEPTIONS

Why do some people voice concern about Girl Scout Cookies? Why are there anti-Girl Scout social media posts and websites?

In short, it's because they've been fed false information about Girl Scouts and the cookie program. As a large and visible organization, Girl Scouts is occasionally a target for outside groups with agendas. There is much false information available through the internet these days. It requires taking a pause and thinking for ourselves. We encourage everyone to be diligent about fact-checking and avoid blindly following unknown sources.

How do Girl Scouts combat false information online?

It's always hard to prove a negative, and it continues to be an ongoing battle that GSUSA is leading for the Movement. [Snopes.com](https://snopes.com) and [Factcheck.org](https://factcheck.org) are considered reputable, credible fact-checking sites. They have both debunked negative claims about Girl Scouts. Those who won't believe these third-party fact-checkers or our official statements may not be convinced by a simple message or explanation. But we continue to share the correct information, our positions, and urge our volunteers and parents to prepare by reviewing facts and credible information for themselves.

On social media, Councils and GSUSA frequently report false content as misinformation to Facebook, Twitter and other sites, to have it pulled down. However, due to platforms' sensitivity to censorship, it's not as simple as it may seem. For example, Facebook now has a misinformation rule, but they are still wary of censoring any media posted and have prioritized political material. It would be helpful for members and supporters to report false information as they come across it as well – the higher the volume of complaints, the higher the reported content is positioned in the review queue.

Is Girl Scouts political?

No. Girl Scouts is non-partisan and non-political. In recent years it's become increasingly difficult to appear so in our divided political environment. As GSUSA and Councils become more sensitive to the changing environment, the goal is to keep focused on our mission. Our organization aims to serve all girls and support the issues and causes important to them.

What is Girl Scouts' relationship with Planned Parenthood?

Girl Scouts does *not* support Planned Parenthood in any way. Nor does Girl Scouts advocate one way or another on issues that we consider private and best handled by families. Furthermore, as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, we are *not* allowed to support any other organization financially.

Did GSUSA post or remove posts from social media in 2020?

In October 2020, GSUSA acknowledged the selection of Senator Kamala Harris as VP Candidate and appointment of Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court on social media, as this is consistent with a tradition of recognizing women who have risen to the top of their field and broken barriers. Both posts were taken down because our national colleagues felt the conversation turned severely negative, unproductive, and ultimately violated their social media community guidelines.

In hindsight, GSUSA acknowledged that there was a misjudgment of the divided social atmosphere at the time, and removing the posts added to the destructive spiral and took away from the conversation we want to be having about supporting girls. They are developing a renewed and refocused social media strategy and content review process to ensure our nonpartisan mission is at the forefront.

What if customers say they won't support cookies because of the social media posts about Kamala Harris and Amy Coney Barrett?

We believe the divisive situation that arose from the aforementioned social media posts demonstrates that Girl Scouts is needed more than ever. Our hope is that a majority of cookie customers understand how the program and proceeds benefit not only girls in Arizona but the whole community and will continue supporting this important learning opportunity. We suggest respectfully reminding those who express concern of why the program is beneficial and encourage them to check out girlscoutsaz.org/support-cookies.

Does GSUSA receive profits from Girl Scout Cookies?

No, GSUSA does not benefit from the sale of cookies. One hundred percent of cookie proceeds earned in our Council stay in our Council to support local girls.

Where does the cookie money go?

Funds raised from the sale of cookies benefit all the Girl Scouts in our Council both directly and indirectly. Cookie proceeds are the largest income source for Council's girl programs, volunteer training, our facilities, four camp properties, and the financial assistance that keeps Girl Scouting in Arizona available and affordable for all.

Are Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts part of the same organization?

No, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts are two completely different organizations, each with a Congressional Charter. Only registered Girl Scouts sell Girl Scout Cookies. Non-registered members cannot sell cookies or benefit from proceeds. This is a safety and liability policy and is of the utmost importance in guaranteeing Council can support situations that may arise while selling cookies.

IF APPROACHED BY A MISINFORMED CUSTOMER

- Please refer them to girlscoutsaz.org/fortherecord or our Council Communications Team at marcom@girlscoutsaz.org.
- Remind them our priority is to let the girls learn and have fun. Ask that adults keep adult conversations to themselves. However, we don't want members putting themselves in an untenable situation. This is especially true if a person becomes agitated in conversation – please remove yourself and girls from the setting.
- It is increasingly common for the media to approach Girl Scout members, whether at a booth or through social media. If you are approached by the media and asked for your Girl Scout opinion on potentially controversial topics, please do not respond. Instead, contact the Council Communications Team at marcom@girlscoutsaz.org, 602.430.8852, or 602.531.5935 (Council Emergency Phone).