



UNITED STATES  
OLYMPIC COMMITTEE  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

August 12, 2013

U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Family

Dear Friends:

As you know, we have been seeking guidance from the International Olympic Committee as to how the recently passed anti-LGBT laws in Russia could impact athletes and others in Sochi for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. There have been conflicting media reports regarding the applicability of the laws during the Games, and we continue to seek assurances that athletes, delegation members, the media and fans will be safe while attending the Games next year. Whether or not we receive those assurances, however, I want you to know how we feel about the law itself.

We strongly support equal rights for all and believe that laws restricting the right to act and speak in support of the LGBT community are inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the Olympic and Paralympic movements. We have shared our views with the IOC. At the same time, however, we cannot forget that we are first and foremost a sports organization. Our mission is to help enable American athletes to win medals at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Our overriding obligation is to deliver a well-prepared team and to support our athletes, all of them. That is where we will direct our energies.

Some Americans who share our views regarding the law have advocated for a boycott. We strongly oppose the notion that a boycott of the Olympic and Paralympic Games is in anyone's best interests. The Olympic and Paralympic Games bring people together. They unite the world and break down barriers. The Games demonstrate how it is possible to compete fiercely but respectfully. They demonstrate how people with disparate views can come together and celebrate what they have in common, most notably the will to be the best you can be. The Games do not belong to countries, they belong to the athletes around the world who have been training most of their lives for one moment in time.

I welcome your input and appreciate your support of our athletes as they begin their final preparations for Sochi. We are lucky to have a diverse group of athletes representing our nation at each Olympic and Paralympic Games—it makes us a stronger and a better Team USA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S.A. Blackmun".

Scott A. Blackmun  
Chief Executive Officer