

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 21, 2013

Mr. Thomas Bach
President
International Olympic Committee
Château de Vidy
Case postale 356
1001 Lausanne
Switzerland

Dear President Bach:

As Members of the United States Congress with great respect for the mission and objective of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (Olympic Games), we write to affirm our support for the Fundamental Principles of Olympism and express our grave concern regarding ongoing discrimination in the Russian Federation, the host country of the 22nd Winter Olympics next year.

We applaud the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Olympic Games for their many successes, to date, in promoting peace through sport. The Olympic Games are unparalleled in their ability to bring together people of various cultures and backgrounds. In fact, as you know, it is a basic principle of the Olympic Games to promote respect for universal fundamental ethical principles in a setting free of discrimination. In particular, Fundamental Principle of Olympism Number Six explicitly prohibits “[a]ny form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise.” Like you, we understand the necessity of compassion and non-discrimination in order to build a peaceful and better world.

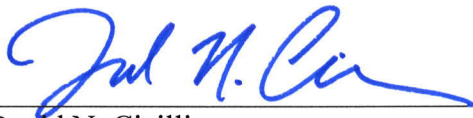
We are concerned with discriminatory practices in the Russian Federation that are antithetical to the Olympic Principles, especially regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. Among other concerning actions, Russia’s recently enacted anti-“propaganda” law, prohibiting the promotion of “non-traditional sexual relations,” is the most widely reported government action targeting LGBT individuals and families. This type of state-sanctioned discrimination, and the violence it encourages, creates a host country atmosphere that is not conducive to the peaceful promotion of sport. We are concerned about the safety and well-being of LGBT athletes and spectators from all countries, including Russia.

Although we appreciate your recent reassurance that the IOC is committed to non-discrimination, we are concerned that the IOC has not adequately addressed actions attacking or abridging basic human rights. The Olympic Games will not be truly free from discrimination unless the IOC acknowledges and repudiates widespread oppression. Before and during these Games, the IOC has an opportunity to convey to the Russian Federation, and future host countries, that discrimination is not conducive to bringing the world together in peace. We encourage the IOC to be a leader in the promotion of tolerance, non-discrimination, and cultural

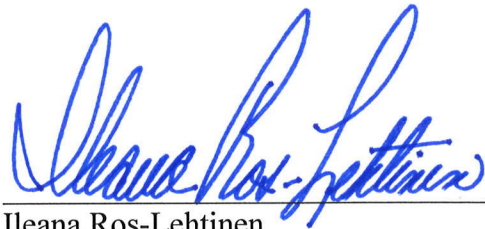
exchange. First, we ask the IOC to support athletes who express support for the basic human rights of LGBT individuals. Second, we ask you to ensure that there is a safe space for LGBT athletes, trainers and officials, and guests in the Olympic Village. Finally, we believe the IOC should follow the example recently set by the United States Olympic Committee and explicitly include sexual orientation in existing non-discrimination policies.

The IOC has a unique ability to continue advancing the cause of protecting human rights in all corners of the globe, as we have seen in its efforts to further gender equality. While we understand that politics are not a component of the Olympic Games, we believe the upcoming Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, provide an opportunity for the IOC to ensure the integrity of the Olympic Charter now and for future generations. Strong statements and actions by the IOC that uphold ideals of non-discrimination and commit to the protection of human rights will illustrate how the Olympic Games achieve their fundamental principle of “plac[ing] sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind.”

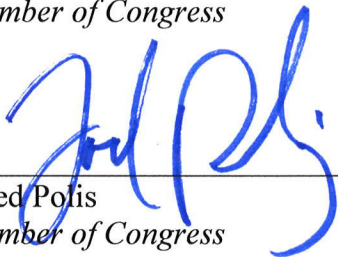
Sincerely,



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



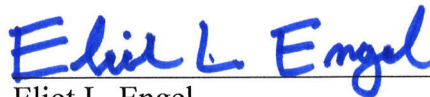
Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Alan S. Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Richard L. Hanna
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Joseph Crowley

Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay

Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Sander M. Levin

Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel

Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

CPG

Christopher P. Gibson
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen

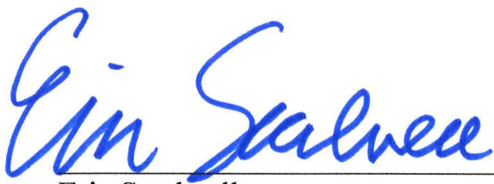
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor

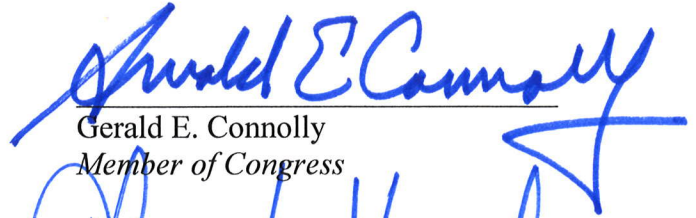
Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.

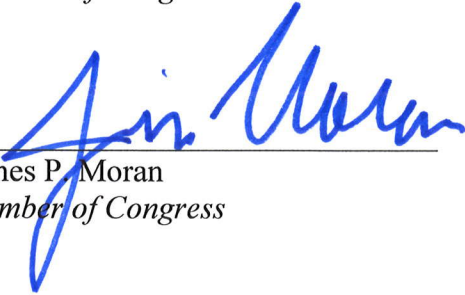
John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



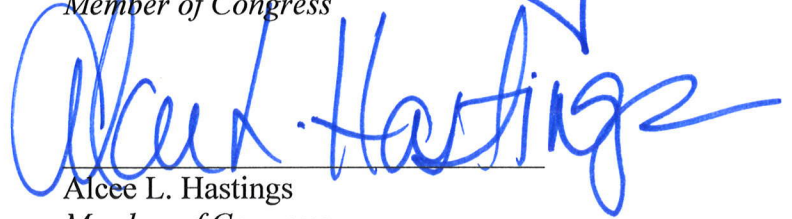
Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



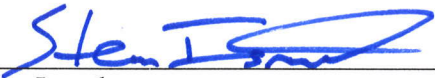
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



James P. Moran
Member of Congress



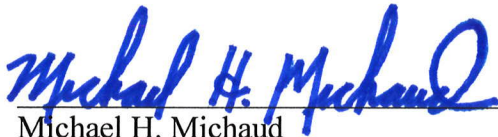
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Steve Israel
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress



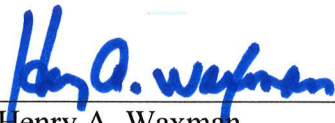
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



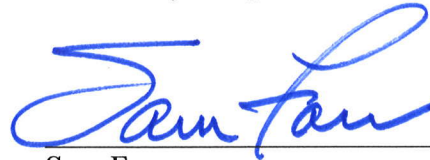
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



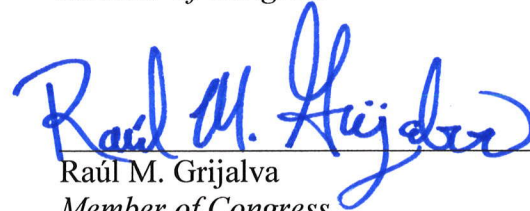
Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



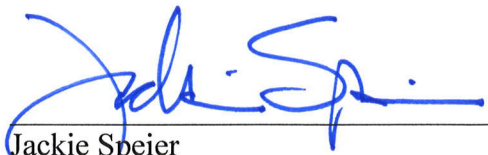
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



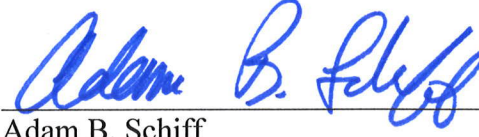
Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



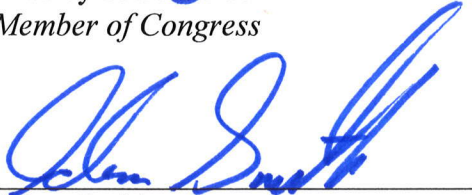
Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress



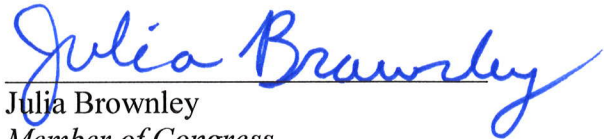
Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Matthew A. Cartwright
Member of Congress



Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress