

United States Senate

May 20, 2016

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

Dear President Bach,

For more than a century, the Olympic Games have been recognized as the world's premier setting for the most exceptional and well-trained athletes from a variety of sports to compete on the same stage, with fair and consistent standards, ultimately recognizing the best for their achievements.

The Games have also stood as a venue for peoples of vastly different cultures, languages and traditions to come together in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding that we believe has fostered a stronger community of nations.

My predecessor, the late Senator Ted Stevens, was a champion of the Olympics here in the United States, and a believer in the importance of competitive amateur sports and the virtues embodied by the Games. He was a strong advocate for extending opportunities to women to participate in sports, and is fondly remembered by American athletes for having introduced legislation that created the U.S. Olympic Committee.

However, due to recent allegations of a widespread doping program employed by the Russian Federation, allegedly at the direction of President Vladimir Putin, I believe that both the confidence in the competitive process and the spirit of respect among nations are being increasingly undermined.

As you are well aware, last November, the World Anti-Doping Agency uncovered a shocking doping scandal among Russian track and field athletes that led to the loss of accreditation of Russia's main drug-testing lab. Dr. Grigory Rodchenkov, Russia's former top anti-doping official, has since revealed that the alleged doping regime was both endorsed by the Russian government and employed across a number of different sports and international competitions, significantly raising the specter of this scandal.

I share the deep concern you expressed in a recent op-ed that this potential doping scheme could represent an "unprecedented level of criminality." Once the World Anti-Doping Agency's investigation is complete, it is incumbent on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to act swiftly and send a strong message that violations of the rules of the Games will not be tolerated.

The IOC's response will determine whether and to what degree the confidence of our athletes can be restored. They need to know that their abilities will be fairly assessed in relation to their international peers without the taint of performance enhancing drugs and other banned practices.

The current scandal has unfortunately cast a shadow over the upcoming Summer Olympic Games. Many athletes have overcome great odds and obstacles to represent their home countries in Rio de Janeiro. Allowing athletes who have benefitted from banned practices to compete on the same stage sets an unfortunate precedent that will invariably extinguish the virtues of fairness and athletic excellence that have garnered the Olympic Games such respect and admiration.

I also urge you to thoroughly investigate how Russia's alleged doping program has impacted past Olympic competitions. To restore confidence in the Games, past violations should also be dealt with by revoking any medals awarded to athletes found in violation of the IOC's rules, and properly recognizing the competitors who rightfully earned those medals. Athletes who have devoted their lives to this competition deserve nothing less.

If the IOC does not act sufficiently in response to the Russian Federation's alleged criminal activities, the committee risks subverting the hard work, aspirations and unbridled determination of thousands of athletes, and imperiling the future of the Games.

Please keep the Olympic spirit alive by acting appropriately on behalf of our many great athletes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dan Sullivan
United States Senator

cc: Scott Blackmun, CEO, U.S. Olympic Committee
Sir Craig Reedie, President, World Anti-Doping Agency
Senator John Thune, Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Senator Bill Nelson, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation