

# United States Senate

January 13, 2022

Ms. Sarah Hirshland  
CEO  
U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee  
27 S Tejon St.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Dear Ms. Hirshland

With the 2022 Winter Olympic Games less than a month away, I write to inquire about the safety and security of the United States' athletes competing in the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing.

At the direction of General Secretary Xi, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is committing genocide against Uyghur Muslims and operating a massive surveillance campaign against its own citizens. Communist China has taken away the freedoms of Hong Kongers and imprisoned or silenced anyone who has spoken out against the Communist Party. This suppression of freedom is on full display through the CCP's silencing of tennis player Peng Shuai after she accused Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli of sexual abuse. The CCP even uses multinational, often American, companies to suppress or influence Americans abroad. It is a sad fact that freedom of speech simply does not exist in the eyes of the CCP. That is why I have repeatedly called on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to move the 2022 Winter Olympic Games out of Communist China and to a country that respects human rights.

It is for these and other reasons that the U.S. Department of State currently recommends that U.S. citizens should reconsider their travel to Communist China due to the "arbitrary enforcement of local laws."<sup>1</sup> Recent reporting on Communist China's "zero COVID-19" policy and its announcement that it is limiting spectator attendance only to Chinese citizens should raise concerns. The CCP has a track record of stealing American citizens' biological and personal information and, because of the Olympic Games' location in Beijing, we are sending U.S. citizens to a place where the CCP is in

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<sup>1</sup> United States Department of State. *China International Travel Information*. Accessed January 10, 2022. [<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/China.html>]

charge of so-called COVID-19 testing protocols. Additionally, reports indicate that your organization is aware of Communist China's draconian technological surveillance by warning athletes in a memo that, "it should be assumed that all data and communications in China can be monitored, compromised or blocked."<sup>2</sup>

Our country is proud of all the American athletes that have earned the honor of representing our nation on the world stage. Their sacrifice and commitment to their sport is truly admirable and it is imperative that we ensure their protection and safety during the games. As athletes frequently do, during the Olympic Games, U.S. athletes may wish to use their platform to highlight Communist China's human rights violations or suppression of free speech and must be protected in doing so. As a member of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee with oversight of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, I request prompt responses to the following questions to ensure our athletes traveling to Communist China are safe:

1. What actions is Team USA taking to ensure the physical safety and security of U.S. athletes?
  - a. Which federal agencies is Team USA actively working with to ensure the safety of U.S. athletes while in Communist China?
2. How does Team USA coordinate with U.S. athletes to ensure all information and risks associated with international travel, especially travel to and competition in Communist China, is communicated to the athletes?
3. How will Team USA ensure U.S. athletes have the ability to speak freely and engage in social media discourse freely without fear of censorship or persecution and without the threat of their personal data and information being stolen by the Communist Chinese government?
4. In regards to COVID-19 testing protocols at the Games, who will be in charge of handling the testing process and physical samples of all U.S. athletes and personnel to ensure accurate results?
5. In light of Communist China's "zero COVID-19" policies, if a member of Team USA does test positive, how will it be handled?
  - a. Will a representative from the United States verify those results?
  - b. Will those who test positive be subject to measures dictated by the Chinese Government?

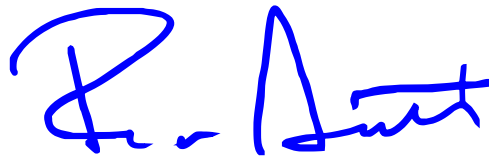
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<sup>2</sup> Gold, A.; Fried, I.; Allen-Ebrahimian, B. (2022, January 11). *China makes a show of opening up the internet for the Olympics*. Axios. [<https://www.axios.com/beijing-china-olympics-internet-censorship-35e1cd8e-0af4-4175-825b-19ee68fd8e34.html>]

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I look forward to your prompt response and working together to protect the safety and security of our distinguished American athletes at the 2022 Winter Olympic Games.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott  
United States Senator