

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Urges USOPC chair to keep U.S. Olympians safe

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WASHINGTON, D.C.- Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) joined House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), China Task Force Chairman Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX), House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Mike Rogers (R-AL), and other members of the China Task Force in sending a letter to Board Chair of the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) Susanne Lyons stressing the importance of ensuring U.S. Olympians are educated on how to stay safe and on the CCP's gross human rights abuses, including genocide.

"The United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) has a responsibility to ensure our athletes are prepared for these unprecedented Olympic games," the lawmakers wrote. "Congress legislatively empowered the USOPC with the exclusive privilege of representing the United States in the Olympic community. American values are a core part of the USOPC's Congressional charter, including a duty to 'promote a safe environment in sports.' In recent weeks, Congress has acted to further increase the preparedness and safety of American athletes representing the United States in human rights-violating countries, by codifying the American Values and Security in International Athletics Act."

The letter was also signed by: Rep. Andy Barr (R-KY), Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY), Rep. Michael Waltz (R-FL), Rep. Darin LaHood (R-IL), Rep. Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA), Rep. Chris Stewart (R-UT), Rep. Neal Dunn (R-FL), Rep. Mark Green (R-TN), Rep. Mike Garcia (R-CA), Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA), Rep. Diana Harshbarger (R-TN) and Rep. Young Kim (R-CA).

The full text of the letter can be found [here](#) and below.

Dear Chair Lyons,

The 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing will be the first Olympic games to take place in a country that is conducting an ongoing genocide. Therefore, these games are an unprecedented threat to American values, inalienable human rights, and the spirit of the Olympics. It is vital that our athletes arrive fully informed about the

reality of the genocide occurring in China, as well as the broad range of other human rights abuses and malign actions committed by the Chinese government and Communist Party. The United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) has a responsibility to ensure our athletes are prepared for these unprecedented Olympic games.

Congress legislatively empowered the USOPC with the exclusive privilege of representing the United States in the Olympic community. American values are a core part of the USOPC's Congressional charter, including a duty to "promote a safe environment in sports."¹ In recent weeks, Congress has acted to further increase the preparedness and safety of American athletes representing the United States in human rights-violating countries, by codifying the American Values and Security in International Athletics Act².

The abhorrent reality of the Olympics occurring in a genocidal state will leave a permanent stain on the legacy of Beijing 2022 and the International Olympic Committee. The USOPC has a responsibility to ensure our athletes know that Congress and the Administration have designated the Chinese Communist Party's crimes against Uyghurs as genocide, a term the U.S. government reserves for history's most grave human rights atrocities. Over one million Uyghurs and members of other religious and ethnic minorities have been forced into concentration camps, been subject to abusive brainwashing and political indoctrination, have had their families forcibly separated, have been put to forced labor, and have been subject to sexual violence and efforts to reduce their population's birth rate.

We also remain seriously concerned that the American delegation to Beijing may be unprepared for personal security risks, particularly for individuals who exercise their freedom of speech. The "closed loop management system" enforced by the Beijing Organizing Committee - allegedly in response to the pandemic - will give the Chinese government an unprecedented level of control over international athletes, while at the same time hindering access by the U.S. State Department. The Department has been forthright that its consular access to athletes in need remains uncertain, and that the entirety of its China Travel Advisory applies to the games, including major threats of arbitrary detention "for sending private electronic messages critical of the PRC government," a lack of due process, and the use of propaganda campaigns to target U.S. citizens. These risks are very likely to be heightened given the Chinese government's total control inside the "closed loop" and the pervasive surveillance the CCP demands over events prioritized in its external propaganda efforts.

This week, a Beijing Organizing Committee official issued a veiled threat to those

who would speak out, saying “Any behavior or speech that is against the Olympic spirit, especially against the Chinese laws and regulations, are also subject to certain punishment.” Public statements from yourself and other USOPC officials acknowledge the danger, but sadly such statements indicate that our athletes are being encouraged to self-censor: “The laws of China are distinct and different... The expectation is we abide by the rules of that country.” Rather than push American athletes to follow the CCP’s party line, the USOPC should empower Team USA with the resources to understand the human rights crisis they face when representing our country in China and take action to ensure their safety.

We urge you in the strongest terms to ensure that Team USA is fully informed about the human rights situation in China, including its ongoing genocide, and request that you reply with:

- An explanation of USOPC’s efforts to educate American participants in Beijing 2022 about the Chinese Communist Party’s malign actions including its human rights abuses, genocide, as well as threats to athletes’ personal safety.
- An explanation of what actions the USOPC has taken to keep American participants safe if they choose to exercise their freedom of speech during Beijing 2022.

In addition, we ask that you share this letter with every Team USA athlete so they can understand the threats posed by the CCP and take measures to protect themselves while representing the United States in Beijing.