

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 30, 2021

Ms. Sarah Hirshland
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee
27 S. Tejon St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Dear Ms. Hirshland:

Every two years, Americans, and the rest of the world, anxiously await the arrival of the Olympics and Paralympics. Throughout the duration of the competition, we watch athletes who have dedicated countless hours, days, and years to achieving their dreams, against all odds. We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way in which the world functions. We write today to express concern about reports that Paralympic athletes were denied the right to have their own Personal Care Assistant (PCA) accompany them throughout their time at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics.

On March 20, 2021, the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, the Tokyo Organizing Committee of 2020, and the Government of Japan, officially declared that spectators would not be allowed to attend the games due to the ongoing worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. The United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) stated that restrictions put in place by organizers and the Japanese government do not permit any personnel other than essential staff into the country.

We understand the decision made by the five Olympic-affiliated entities to reduce on-site staff due to the pandemic. However, a PCA is essential for athletes with disabilities and impairments. Disabled athletes without a PCA could potentially find themselves in high-risk situations. It is unreasonable to expect these individuals to navigate and compete in the games without assistance, and a PCA should fall under the category of essential staff. With access and availability of vaccines, we see this safety measure as unnecessary. As Members of Congress, we encourage USOPC to ensure that all athletes receive the reasonable accommodations they request as a result of their disability. All participants in the Paralympic Games should have the support they need to feel comfortable competing on behalf of the United States of America.

We know that our athletes who compete and represent the United States consider participation in the Olympics and Paralympics an incredible honor. We are grateful for the work you have taken on to ensure that the 2020 games are both safe and successful. We look forward to watching and supporting our athletes.

Sincerely,



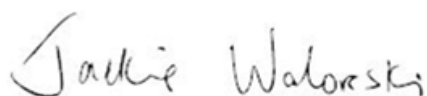
Carol D. Miller
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



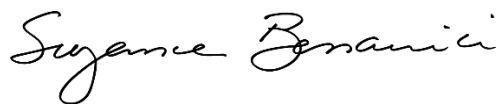
Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Member of Congress



Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress



Kelly Armstrong
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress



Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress