

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 31, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf  
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE  
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Robert Redfield  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Dear Secretary Pompeo, Acting Secretary Wolf, Director Redfield:

We write to ask for your assistance in supporting Team USA athletes and their support staff in their efforts to qualify for the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games and continued athletic success. As with most sectors of the economy, Team USA athletes and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) have been dramatically affected by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. In support of Team USA's continued efforts to qualify for the upcoming Games and continued athletic success, we would like to request your assistance for athletes and their support staff to ensure their ability to travel internationally this summer and this coming fall.

We are pleased that the Department of State has entered phase one of the Diplomacy Strong reopening processes. Several Team USA athletes submitted applications for passport services just prior to or during the COVID-19 closures, and more must submit applications before the upcoming training season begins later this summer and this fall. As competitions and training events begin to resume, these athletes are approaching their target departure dates for international travel. While we recognize that exceptions to policies for expedited passports must be limited, we ask that the Department of State identify a point person to support Team USA athletes and their support staff to streamline the passport application and renewal process.

It was also recently announced that the European Union (EU) is restricting travel on American citizens. We understand that negotiations are ongoing, but we ask that the Department of State specifically seek a waiver from this restriction for Olympic and Paralympic athletes. Before the end of 2020, Team USA is scheduled to compete in over 30 competitions in the EU. In addition to these events, many athletes and their support teams travel to Europe in advance of their season to participate in training opportunities, which is especially important to their health and safety as they increase their activity levels following COVID-19 related restrictions.

While the EU is a prominent example of global travel restrictions, we understand that Team USA will likely encounter similar policies in other nations as they compete internationally this season. We understand that the complexity of this environment may be best coordinated by the U.S.

Embassies in each respective country and if so, we ask that the Department of State identify a point person to support Team USA athletes and their support staff to streamline outreach to Consular personnel in the requisite nations.

We recognize that exceptions for U.S. athletes may be dependent on reciprocity exceptions for international athletes attempting to come to the U.S. for similar competitions. We understand that the U.S. has approved more than 1,700 exemptions for foreign professional athletes traveling to the U.S., and we are hopeful that this posture will encourage similar treatment for U.S. athletes contending with global travel restrictions. We appreciate DHS's assistance and consideration for Olympic and Paralympic athletes and essential staff as exemptions develop.

International travel is critical for Team USA to continue on their qualification paths toward the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games. We recognize the challenging nature of the current situation and request that the State Department work with Team USA to ensure they are ready and able to compete on behalf of our nation.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent matters.

Sincerely,



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Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



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Mitt Romney  
United States Senator



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Jerry Moran  
United States Senator



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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator