



United States Congress

NEWS RELEASE

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Craig and Simpson Secure \$8 Million For 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Idaho

Idaho Senator and Congressman join efforts to ensure substantial federal support International Special Olympics events in Idaho during House/Senate conference meeting

Washington, D.C. – Idaho Senator Larry Craig and Congressman Mike Simpson have secured a total of \$8 million for the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Idaho on the final version of legislation funding the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. The \$8 million total brings federal funding for the Idaho-held Games in line with that received by other States in previous years.

Craig secured \$3 million for the Games in the original Senate-passed version of the legislation. Over the past several weeks, Simpson secured bi-partisan support on the House side for an additional \$5 million bringing total Idaho Games funding to \$8 million.

“With this conference report, Congress has clearly demonstrated support for the 2009 games in Idaho,” Craig said. “Mike and I were proud to work this issue on both sides of the Capitol, and I think that teamwork paid off. This was an important step.”

“Given the quick timeframe in which Idaho must get ready for the Games, this imminent infusion of federal assistance was absolutely necessary to ensure a world-class event,” said Simpson. “Senator Craig and I are thrilled to have the strong support of our colleagues on the Committee for the Special Olympics World Winter Games and are appreciative of the efforts of Jim Schmit and everyone else associated with the Games in helping us secure these critical funds.”

According to the organizers of the Games, holding the event in Idaho will require at least \$28 million in total contributions, with the federal government’s share representing just a portion of the total needs. The event will attract more than 3,000 athletes from over 100 nations to compete in seven Winter Olympic-type sporting events. This will be the largest multi-sport event ever held in the state of Idaho.

“Senator Craig and Congressman Simpson have been relentless in their support of the 2009 World Games taking place in Idaho. Their hard work pursuing federal funding will help make these games a world-class event for the athletes, families, spectators and volunteers,” said Jim Schmit, Qwest Idaho President and Chairman of the Games Fundraising Committee.

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Craig and Simpson are both members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and were appointed as conferees to final negotiations on the bill which concluded today. The bill will be considered in its final form in the coming weeks by the House and Senate and will eventually be sent to President Bush.

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