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and

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BEFORE
THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AGAINST DOPING IN SPORT

Thursday, May 22nd, 2008

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today before this Committee.

My name is Jair Lynch and I am a member of the United States Olympic Committee's Board of Directors. I am also a two-time Olympian, having won a silver medal in gymnastics at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. As such, I bring to this hearing a dual perspective: that of an Olympic policy-maker as well as that of an athlete who had the tremendous honor of representing our country in the Olympic Games. I also bring to this hearing a profound appreciation for the privilege and responsibility of being associated with the Olympic Movement.

The Olympic Games are more than just a quadrennial gathering of elite athletes. The Olympic Games are the very manifestation of a movement that is rooted in the values of fair play, fundamental ethical principles, and the educational value of good example. By adhering to these values, the Olympic Movement serves as an inspiration to millions throughout the world, particularly youth, who are influenced both by the accomplishments of the athletes, and by the manner in which their accomplishments are achieved. In Olympic competition, it is not just winning the competition that is important; the manner in which the medal is won is equally important.

Quite simply, the world expects a victory in the Olympic Games to be entirely the result of an individual's natural effort rather than through manipulation or violation of the rules, whether they are rules of play or rules prohibiting performance enhancement through the use of illegal or banned substances or methods.

I am here this morning to speak briefly about the International Convention Against Doping In Sport, the expeditious ratification of which is important for a number of reasons. Among them is that such action will signal to the world the U.S. Government's continuing commitment, leadership and support in addressing the issue of doping in international sport. In addition, having governments affirmatively support the principles underlying the World Anti-Doping Code demonstrates the international cooperation necessary to make greater progress in the fight against doping in international sport. International cooperation is something that the USOC recognizes and embraces through many of its activities – as sport can serve as an ideal vehicle to enhance international diplomacy.

When the United States decides to enter into an international treaty, concern is often raised that the United States will have to submit to international rules or obligations that are inconsistent with our own practices or values. That is not the case in this situation. Nearly a decade ago, the USOC created the United States Anti-Doping Agency (“USADA”), an independent anti-doping testing and adjudication entity that helps protect the health and well-being of athletes and the

integrity of sport by administering one of the most rigorous testing programs in the world. The success of an externalized anti-doping program and the progress made by USADA over the years has been significant, and USADA has been recognized by the World Anti-Doping Agency as a leader in the fight against doping in international sport. One of the main reasons for the success of our anti-doping program is the close partnership that was developed between the USOC, the U.S. Congress, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and their full cooperation every step of the way. This relationship stands as a positive example of how the public and private sectors can and should work together in combating a problem of national, indeed, international significance.

With the opening of the 2008 Olympic Games fast approaching, Senate confirmation of this Convention will represent an affirmation of the progress that is being made by USADA and the commitment the USOC and our nation's Government has made to uphold the values of clean competition.

Another important reason for the expeditious ratification of this Convention has to do with the ability for cities from our nation to host future Olympic and Paralympic Games. The International Olympic Committee has mandated that in order to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games, a nation must have ratified, accepted, approved or acceded to the International Convention Against Doping in Sport.

Specifically and more immediate is our nation's bid from the City of Chicago to host the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. In addition to Chicago, there are six international cities vying for the honor of hosting the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games which are: Baku (Azerbaijan), Doha (Qatar), Madrid (Spain), Prague (Czech Republic), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and Tokyo (Japan). Each of the nations for each of these cities have already ratified, accepted or acceded the Convention.

Chicago has put forth what the USOC believes is a very strong bid to host the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. But without Congressional ratification of the Convention, the IOC will not accept a bid from the United States. Needless to say, prompt action enhances the prospects of America's bid.

On behalf of the United States Olympic Committee and America's Olympic and Paralympic athletes who will be participating in the 2008 Games this summer, I thank you for your attention and consideration of this important Convention. I respectfully ask that you take whatever steps are necessary to ensure this Convention is ratified at the earliest possible date. In so doing you will be confirming our country's commitment to clean and drug-free competition, and you will be protecting Chicago's bid for the privilege of hosting the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Thank you.