United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 23, 2016

Lawrence F. Probst, III
Chairman
United States Olympic Committee
One Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Dear Chairman Probst:

As proud supporters of the U.S. Olympic Team and our outstanding athletes who are preparing to travel to Brazil to participate in the upcoming Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, we write to ask what steps the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) is taking to assist and protect our athletes against the spread of the Zika virus.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Brazil is the epicenter for the spread of the virus with at least 120,000 suspected cases of Zika—nearly half of all the suspected cases in the Americas.

Recent information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that the Zika virus may be more of a threat than initially anticipated. Research has not only linked the virus to severe birth defects, including microcephaly, in babies born to infected mothers, but to possible neurological effects in adults. There are additional concerns about the duration that the virus lasts in an infected individual so there could be possible cases of transmission in the United States long after the Games have concluded.

Given this context, we hope that the USOC is prepared to work with health authorities both here in the United States and in Brazil to help ensure that all the necessary steps are taken to protect our athletes as they compete this summer.

We stand ready to work with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

CC: Sarah Konrad, Chair of the United States Olympic Committee Athletes' Advisory Council

Bill Nelson
United States Senator

Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Christopher Murphy
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator