

## Branstad and Reynolds team up with full Iowa Congressional Delegation on letter to International Olympi

Written by Office of the Governor of Iowa  
Friday, 15 February 2013 15:17

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(DES MOINES) – Gov. Terry E. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds today joined Iowa’s Congressional Delegation in penning a letter to the International Olympic Committee asking them to reverse a decision that would eliminate wrestling from the Olympic Games.

The bipartisan letter can be found [HERE](#) and is pasted below.

Dr. Jacques Rogge

President, International Olympic Committee (IOC) Executive Board  
Château de Vidy  
Case Postale 356  
1001 Lausanne  
Switzerland

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Dear President Rogge:

We write as a group of elected officials from the State of Iowa, a State with a rich wrestling tradition, regarding the recent decision by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to remove wrestling as an Olympic sport following the 2016 Olympic Games. We strongly urge the IOC to reconsider its position, and vote to ensure wrestling's continued existence in the 2020 summer Olympic Games.

Wrestling harkens back to ancient civilization and the sport's inclusion in the Olympics has only enriched the ongoing Olympic tradition. Early Olympic organizers recognized wrestling's unique and global importance by including the sport in the first modern Olympic Games held in Athens in 1896. Wrestling has been a major part of the Olympics ever since.

The same spirit of competition that drove ancient wrestlers and early modern Olympians has transcended generations, and here in Iowa, we are the beneficiaries of this spirit. It is a sport where self-pride and determination battle and as a result, helps build character. Wrestling does not discriminate by age, gender or economic background.

At its core, wrestling is an instinct and embodies the human qualities of hard work, discipline, and perseverance. Fellow Iowan Dan Gable, an Olympic gold medalist and former US Olympic wrestling coach, best summarized the life foundation that wrestling provides when he stated, "Once you've wrestled, everything else in life is easy."

Iowa is not the sole beneficiary of these traits and wrestling's reach goes well beyond the United States. Forms of wrestling have been important parts of culture in China, Japan, Russia and many other countries. Soviet and Russian wrestlers have won 77 gold medals. Wrestling federations exist in approximately 180 countries and the recent London Olympic Games had wrestlers from 71 countries.

We disagree with the IOC's release statement that: "This is a process of renewing and renovating the program for the Olympics." Renewing or renovating the Olympics should respect important Olympic traditions. Unfortunately, this IOC decision ignores wrestling's rich Olympic tradition.

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We would also encourage a transparent voting system for future votes on which sports should be included as part of the Olympic Games. As public officials, we hold transparency as a sacred principle and we would encourage the International Olympic Committee to abide by that same principle.

We encourage your prompt reconsideration of your decision to exclude wrestling from the Olympics. We hope that wrestling will continue to be an important part of the Olympic tradition.

Sincerely,

Terry E. Branstad

Kim Reynolds

Governor of Iowa

Lt. Governor of Iowa

Charles Grassley

Tom Harkin

United States Senator

United States Senator

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Tom Latham

Steve King

United States Congressman

United States Congressman

Bruce Braley

Dave Loebsack

United States Congressman

United States Congressman

cc: Raphael Martinetti, President of International Wrestling Federation

Larry Probst, Chairman, United States Olympic Committee

James Ravannack, President, USA Wrestling

Dan Gable, National Wrestling Hall of Fame Dan Gable Museum

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