



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN

July 24, 2013

Mr. Stephen B. Burke
Chief Executive Officer
NBCUniversal, LLC
30 Rockefeller Plaza
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Mr. Burke,

Every two years, the Olympic Games bring the world together in a global display of friendship and unity amongst competing nations, celebrating the very best of our common humanity.

Unfortunately, a dark cloud has formed over the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, following the passage of a Russian law banning "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations." The law functionally criminalizes even the most modest gesture of support for the dignity and humanity of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. Furthermore, the law contains a provision that allows the Russian government to arrest and detain foreigners for up to 14 days for supporting LGBT equality.

According to media analysis of the new law, it is now illegal in Russia to, among other things:

- Publicly display affection – such as holding hands – between LGBT people;
- Tweet positive messages about LGBT people and their relationships;
- Broadcast positive news stories about LGBT people;
- Equate straight and gay relationships;
- Wear or display a rainbow flag, or any other symbol of LGBT equality.

Millions of LGBT Russians live in fear that their government will arrest them, simply because of who they are. Beyond them, consider the very obvious consequences for the LGBT people who will travel to Russia for this Olympiad. Along with any openly-gay athletes, the new law means that fans, coaches, sponsors, and even your own journalists and staff could be arrested for innocuous acts like displaying a rainbow flag or publicly embracing a spouse or partner.

Both the International Olympic Committee and the United States Olympic Committee have made public assurances that gay athletes will be safe during the 2014 games. However, under this newly-enacted law there is no way to guarantee the safety and security of openly-LGBT Olympic visitors in a country now defined by this draconian state-sponsored homophobia and transphobia. Just this week four Dutch tourists were arrested after they were suspected of promoting homosexuality. The group was conducting interviews for a documentary about the LGBT community in Russia.

NBCUniversal, which has the exclusive rights to broadcast the Olympics in the United States, has a unique opportunity – and a responsibility – to expose this inhumane and unjust law to the millions of American viewers who will tune in to watch the Games. You no doubt agree that it wouldn't be right to air the opening ceremonies, which is an hours-long advertisement for the host country, without acknowledging that a whole segment of the Russian population - not to mention foreign athletes and visitors - can be jailed for an immutable aspect of their identity.

WORKING FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER EQUAL RIGHTS

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For years, NBCUniversal/Comcast has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to LGBT equality, as evidenced by consistently scoring a 100% on HRC's Corporate Equality Index. And now as plans are being formed and finalized for broadcasting one of the most widely-viewed international events, you have the chance to make a difference for the millions of LGBT people living in Russia, as well as countless visitors to the Sochi Games who are now subject to a law that violates their basic human rights.

We would very much like to engage you in a conversation about this issue.

Sincerely,



Chad Griffin
President, Human Rights Campaign

CC: Patricia Fili-Krushel
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Mark Lazarus
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