

United States
Olympic & Paralympic
Committee

1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Madam President Coventry
c/o James Macleod
International Olympic Committee
Maison Olympique 1
Route de Vidy
1007 Lausanne, Switzerland
james.macleod@olympic.org

January 23, 2026

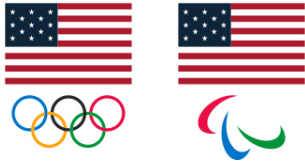
Secretary General Heike Größwang
International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation
Maison du Sport
Avenue de Rhodanie 54
1007 Lausanne, Switzerland
heike.groesswang@ibsf.org

Dear Madam President Coventry, Secretary General Größwang, & Members of the IOC Executive Board,

I am writing to respectfully request that the IOC Executive Board and International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation take appropriate steps within their authority to preserve Ms. Katie Uhlaender's Olympic dream following the claims of competition manipulation taken at Lake Placid during the last Olympic qualifying event in the North American Cup circuit on 11 January 2026. These actions circumvented the Olympic qualification principles, undermined fair competition, and ultimately deprived Ms. Uhlaender of the opportunity to compete in the XXV Milano Cortina Winter Games.

Under the XXV Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 Qualification System Principles, the IBSF's qualification system may, in exceptional circumstances, be amended with the approval of the IOC Executive Board. Such an amendment to IBSF's qualification system is warranted in this moment given the exceptional circumstances that transpired at Lake Placid and resulted in significant reputational harm to the sport across the world: specifically, allegations that another National Federation delayed withdrawing four of its women's skeleton athletes from the competition until they could not be replaced with other competitors. This action is in direct contravention of the spirit of the IBSF Code of Conduct and has concerned the IBSF enough that they will assemble their Sports Committee to review this incident during its meeting in the spring and will possibly suggest adjustments to the rules. Given the impact this controversy has had on the sliding community, combined with the truly exceptional circumstances of the situation, the IOC Executive Board and IBSF are well within their authority to amend the IBSF's qualification system for women's skeleton in order to preserve fair play and the Olympic Spirit as a whole.

In order to rectify the unfair actions taken at Lake Placid, the IBSF qualification system should be amended to add a discretionary quota spot that the IBSF may award to a particular athlete based upon the exceptional circumstances present here (an option that is very much in line with the Olympic Spirit).



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Amending the qualification system to allow Ms. Uhlaender to participate at the Winter Olympic Games is not only necessary to maintain faith in the sport and Olympic Movement as a whole, but it also aligns with both the Fundamental Principles of Olympism and the IOC's Qualification System Principles. In particular, permitting Ms. Uhlaender to compete at the upcoming Winter Games will uphold the value of fair play (a key Fundamental Principle of Olympism) as well as the primary goal of the qualification system, which is to enable "the participation of the best athletes" (Ms. Uhlaender, who is ranked 19th, is one of the best athletes globally and would strengthen the competitive field).

As demonstrated by the overwhelming support Ms. Uhlaender has received from fans and competing national federations¹ in the wake of this controversy, it is undeniable that Ms. Uhlaender deserves to go to the Olympic Games. She received this support because she is an extraordinary athlete and has been a remarkable ambassador for the sport of skeleton and for the Olympic Movement as a whole for over 20 years. As a five-time Olympian, admired leader, former World Champion, and one of the most respected athletes in the history of women's skeleton, Ms. Uhlaender is the epitome of what it means to be an Olympian and truly embodies the Olympic Spirit. Her pursuit of a sixth Olympic Games is not only a testament to her extraordinary longevity and dedication, but also to the values of perseverance, fairness and excellence that the Olympic Movement seeks to uphold. She is a remarkable role model for generations of sliding athletes. Allowing her to compete in Milano Cortina will deter others from engaging in unsporting conduct and ensure fair competition.

These final weeks before the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympic Games are a time to recognize and celebrate those athletes who have achieved their life-long dreams of becoming Olympians. Unfortunately, the concerning events that unfolded in Lake Placid a few weeks ago have overshadowed and distracted from this joyous time.

For these reasons – Ms. Uhlaender's world ranking, the acknowledged irregularities surrounding the qualification process, her historic accomplishments, and her positive impact on the sport – I respectfully urge you to consider adding a women's skeleton quota spot and awarding it to Ms. Uhlaender.

Thank you for your time, thoughtfulness, and continued commitment to fair and meaningful competition.

Respectfully,

Rocky Harris
Chief of Sport & Athlete Services

¹ Please see attached letters of support from the national federations of Belgium, Korea, Virgin Islands, Malta, Israel, Denmark, and USA.