



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement Condemning Russia's "Anti-Gay" Laws

(Winnipeg, MB; August 12, 2013) – Pride Winnipeg officially states that it condemns Russia's recent anti-gay legislation, which not only directly affects individuals whom identify as or support LGBTTTQ* people, groups and organizations, but also impacts other citizens and groups, both locally and abroad.

We join others in the overwhelming response to the Russian government's reprehensible, homophobic, anti-human rights legislation, which has cast a shadow over the upcoming the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics. Concern for the rights, safety and well-being of fellow LGBTTTQ* individuals in Russia has become a critical and compelling issue worldwide.

Pride Winnipeg is working with Fierté Canada Pride (FCP) and the International Association of Pride Organizers (InterPride) to monitor the situation and inform government officials where possible, and has created a committee to carry out these tasks.

Pride Winnipeg is supporting InterPride's suggested initiatives to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which are outlined as follows:

1. We call on the IOC to work with countries defending LGBTTTQ* rights to create a safe environment for athletes and participants in Sochi by establishing a Rainbow or Pride House either by renting a venue or opening a temporary consulate where there is diplomatic immunity;
2. We encourage the IOC to facilitate participating LGBTTTQ* athletes and allies to wear a rainbow pin or carry a rainbow flag during the march of athletes at the opening and closing ceremonies;
3. We ask the IOC chair to condemn the anti-gay laws in Russia during his opening ceremony remarks.

Pride Winnipeg calls upon those participating in the 2014 Winter Olympics to follow the example of openly gay New Zealand speed skater Blake Skjellerup, who has refused to hide his identity while in Russia or elsewhere around the world. It is our hope that other athletes, trainers and spectators reflect this courage and declare themselves as LGBTTTQ* individuals or allies.

To quote InterPride, "Visibility and a refusal to submit to intimidation is the path to full legal and social equality."

We aspire for peaceful, safe, fun and successful 2014 Winter Olympics.

Pride Winnipeg – The Pride of the Prairies – is one of the largest celebrations between Toronto and Vancouver of LGBTTTQ* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and two-spirited, intersex, and queer/questioning) people and their allies, supporters and friends. Our mission is to affirm the lives of everyone by generating and participating in events that celebrate the history, culture, spirit and pride of people within the Winnipeg community. We invite everyone from far and wide to join our welcoming city and celebrate Pride in Winnipeg – the heart of the continent.

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Pride Winnipeg media contact:

Jeff Myall
Media & Communications Director
Phone: (204) 803-7849
Email: media@pridewinnipeg.com



Pride Winnipeg Festival Inc.
PO BOX 2101 - Station Main Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3C 3R4
www.pridewinnipeg.com

