



January 26, 2015

Dear USATF Board Members

We of the Minnesota Association of USATF, like our colleagues in Athletes Advisory and the Southern California, New England, and Long Island Associations, were surprised and dismayed when the USATF Board of Directors chose to override the clear judgment of the voting delegates at the 2014 Annual Meeting, and selected Stephanie Hightower as USATF's nominee to the IAAF Council. Robert Hersh, the delegates' choice, has served USATF and track & field with distinction, and has risen to the position of Senior Vice President, demonstrating his effectiveness as a leader and the respect he has earned within the IAAF. For the USATF Board to cavalierly dismiss him from that position, in contradiction of the delegates' clear resolution that he remain, is a disservice to the sport, a diminishment of USATF's influence in the IAAF, and an affront to the many volunteers who have given their time and talent to the promotion and support of USATF and the sport of track & field. We urge the USATF Board to reconsider its action, and to reinstate Mr. Hersh as its IAAF nominee.

In announcing its decision, the Board offered only one justification for selecting Ms. Hightower: that she is a "new era" person. That justification, however, rings hollow, and has the sound of a rationalization rather than a valid argument. The judgment of the delegates should be overturned by the Board only in extraordinary circumstances, as shown by the requirement that such an action be allowed only on a two-thirds vote of the Board. And an extraordinary action requires an extraordinary justification. No such justification has been offered here, making the Board's decision an unsupported preference at best, a raw exercise of power at worst.

As the Board has noted, it has the legal power to ignore the stated judgment of the delegates, and to substitute its judgment for theirs. The bald exercise of that power, however, with no legitimate justification, tarnishes the Board and calls its intentions into question. The power to act does not mean that an exercise of that power is the right thing to do. The USATF Board has the duty to act in the best interests of USATF and the sport of track & field, and it should act only when it is the right thing to do. To do otherwise is to taint the Board and its motivations, and to imperil its legitimacy in the eyes of those who it has a duty to serve.

The solution, while perhaps personally distasteful to some, is clear: a motion to reconsider, followed by a reversal of the Board's previous decision. This can be done at the next meeting of the Board, scheduled for February 23 (it appears that nominations are due to the IAAF in May, so there would be plenty of time for the change), or at a special meeting called for that purpose. We respectfully urge the Board to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Recker". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rick Recker
President, USATF Minnesota