

**HEARING BEFORE  
THE CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA**

July 27, 2021

Testimony of David Holyoke  
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Chairman Merkley, Chairman McGovern, respected Members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is David Holyoke. I have been at Airbnb since 2016, and I am currently the Head of Olympics and Paralympics Partnerships.

In our fourteen years, Airbnb has helped guests experience the world in a more authentic, connected way. We began with two hosts who welcomed three guests to their apartment in San Francisco. Today, Airbnb has grown to 4 million Hosts who have welcomed 900 million guest arrivals in more than 220 countries and regions around the world.

At Airbnb, we believe travel can be transformational—it can break down barriers, help people get to know each other, and foster acceptance and understanding. To that end, there are three reasons why we decided to become an Olympic sponsor:

1. **We want to support connections at a global scale.** The Olympic Games have shown that sports can accomplish this goal, bringing the world together through an incredible and inspirational athletic competition.
2. **We want to economically empower athletes via our platform.** In the same way that Hosts are at the heart of the Airbnb experience, athletes are at the core of the Olympic and Paralympic Movement. That's why we are proud that our Olympics partnership is focused on empowering and connecting athletes from different cultures, races, religions, and creeds, all under the banner of sports.
3. **We are particularly proud of the opportunity to support the Refugee Olympic Team.** We see this as an extension of our broader efforts to provide long-term support to refugees.

Airbnb's IOC Sponsorship

As a sponsor of The Olympic Partners (TOP) Programme, established by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), we are committed to a unique partnership to support both the economic empowerment of individual athletes and the role that the Olympics and Paralympics have historically played as a global movement to foster people-to-people connections. This commitment spans nine years and encompasses five Olympic and Paralympic Games. And our partnership is designed to support athletes, not any particular city or Games.

Our athlete-centered approach is based on three pillars:

1. **Supporting and empowering athletes**, particularly via the creation of a specific category of Olympian and Paralympian Hosted Experiences to provide them with a platform to share their voices and earn extra income.
2. **Providing accommodation support to the Olympic Family.**
3. **Supporting the Refugee Olympic and Paralympic Teams.**

To date, we have committed millions to direct support for athletes, including through the creation of the Airbnb Athlete Grant, which supports up to 500 athletes a year with direct travel credits to help meet their accommodation needs when they travel to train or compete. We are proud that more than fifteen different Team USA sports teams are finding ways to connect with each other and continue their training while staying on Airbnb.

We have also established three athlete-focused initiatives unique to Airbnb:

1. **Olympian and Paralympian Experiences on Airbnb.** In 2020, Airbnb and the IOC launched the Olympian and Paralympian Experiences category<sup>1</sup>—one of the largest long-term athlete support programs the IOC has with a TOP Partner. These Experiences provide an opportunity for athletes to generate income while they share their passions and their sport with Guests directly on the Airbnb Experiences platform. When the Tokyo Games were postponed last summer, Airbnb hosted the Olympian and Paralympian Online Experiences Festival in July of 2020, which featured over 200 athletes from around the world hosting Airbnb Experiences and spreading the Olympic and Paralympic spirit to fans around the world.<sup>2</sup>
2. **Accessible Stays for Paralympians.** Like many others with disabilities, Paralympic athletes have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Airbnb will commit to investments that directly support Paralympians and Paralympic hopefuls with up to 8,000 stays that meet their specific travel needs. Paralympians also make up a large portion of the Hosts in our Olympian and Paralympian Experiences category, many of which compete for Team USA.
3. **Support to Refugee Olympic and Paralympic Teams.** Our partnership is also unique in its support of the Refugee Olympic and Paralympic Teams. Over the course of our partnership, we will help create economic opportunities for refugee Olympic and Paralympic athletes with ongoing Online Experiences and also provide funding to support their costs to train and participate in the Games.<sup>3</sup> Just this month, we launched a series of Online Experiences with refugee athlete Hosts that will allow them to share their incredible stories of overcoming adversity and the power of sport while earning meaningful income and raising awareness about

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.airbnb.com/s/experiences/olympics-online>

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.airbnb.com/airbnb-ioc-and-ipc-announce-summer-festival-of-online-experiences/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://news.airbnb.com/airbnb-athlete-travel-grant/>

the global refugee crisis. We have also developed a unique scholarship program that mirrors that of the IOC for the Refugee Olympic Team to create equitability across the teams.

We are proud to do our small part through this athlete-focused partnership to support Olympic and Paralympic athletes as they strive to achieve their dreams and inspire the world.

### Airbnb's Commitment to Human Rights and Fighting Discrimination

We are a company based on connection and belonging. Every day, more than 4 million Hosts have the opportunity to share their homes and culture with guests around the world. To achieve this, we operate globally everywhere the U.S. Government allows us to operate—that includes more than 100,000 individual communities across more than 220 countries and regions around the world. We recognize that our global footprint means we have and will continue to face complex and challenging issues worldwide. That's why our core values and policies have long reflected our recognition of and respect for human rights, as informed by internationally recognized standards such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), and we have a range of policies and tools to support our community and act in accordance with our values everywhere we operate.

Everyone who uses Airbnb must agree to our Community Commitment, a global standard that requires all members of our community to affirmatively agree “to treat everyone in the Airbnb community—regardless of their race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, skin color, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or age—with respect, and without judgment or bias.”<sup>4</sup> This Commitment applies to everyone who uses Airbnb around the world. On an ongoing basis, in markets throughout the world—including in all the countries where the Olympics are scheduled to take place over the course of our partnership—we have removed listings and people from the platform when we find they violate this Community Commitment. This is an important part of our work to address bias and discrimination on our platform, which are antithetical to our mission and values.

We are constantly working to improve, and we plan to build on our commitment to anti-discrimination and other important human rights issues by ensuring our policies and procedures continue to respect human rights.

Given the Commission's mandate, we know you may be particularly interested in Airbnb's work in China. Airbnb's community in China grew organically: Chinese travelers first used Airbnb as guests abroad and decided to host when they returned home—a pattern we have seen all over the world. Our current presence in the country reflects our purpose of enabling individual economic empowerment and bringing people together from communities and neighborhoods around the world to bridge cultures, including in China, which is home to roughly 20 percent of the world's population. Airbnb has a long

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<sup>4</sup> <https://blog.airbnb.com/the-airbnb-community-commitment/>

track record of economically empowering individuals, and we're proud that hosting on Airbnb is an important source of income for our Hosts.

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We're grateful for the opportunity to support global Olympic and Paralympic athletes, Team USA, and our Host and Guest community. Thank you for the chance to testify before you today to share more about Airbnb's commitment to these athletes and the spirit of coming together in global athletic competition. I look forward to your questions.