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STATE SENATOR · 5TH DISTRICT

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January 22, 2020

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Commerce and Trade
FR: Senator Dale Kooyenga
RE: Support for Senate Bill 696

Chairman Feyen and fellow committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 696, legislation that changes the name of the Pettit Olympic Training Center, a nationally renowned indoor ice skating facility that serves as home training facility to hundreds of Olympians.

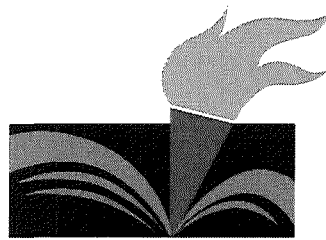
In recent years, the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOC), the governing body of US Olympics, has become protective of its brand and only allows facilities under its direct control to use "Olympic" in their name.

The center's value to Wisconsin was recognized when the state granted the facility tax exempt status years ago. If state statute is not updated to reflect the name change the arena will lose its tax exempt status.

The Pettit Center is a premier facility that features an Olympic size rink and is nationally recognized for training speed skaters from across the country. The center has been home to numerous Olympic athletes and world champions. The facility also serves the general public; my family utilizes their open skate time and it's where my children are now learning to ice skate.

This legislation updates state statutes to reflect the name change from the Pettit Olympic Training Center to the Pettit National Ice Center. The name change is per the request of the center.

Thank you for your time and I encourage you to support this legislation.



Pettit National Ice Center

10 Reasons Why the Pettit Center May Surprise You

10. Official U.S. Speedskating Training Site- Host to 2018 US Olympic Team Trials – Long Track

Opened on December 31, 1992, the Pettit Center provides training time for national team speedskaters and hosts elite national & international events, including the 2018 US Olympic Team Trials and 2020 ISU Four Continents Speedskating Championships. As a 501c-3, the Pettit Center generates more than 90% of its income from its own programming, events, and sponsorships. The Center has updated its interior, installed a customized waste heat recovery system to save natural gas, a new video board, and an external LED message center.

9. More than just an ice rink.

Pettit Center is the 3rd largest meeting/convention space in Milwaukee and 8th busiest special attraction, approaching 425,000 visitors annually. In addition to world-class speed skating and other skating-related sports, it is host to dance competitions and exhibitions, summer sports camps, corporate meetings, games and contests.

8. Internationally acclaimed as one of only four indoor Olympic-size speed skating ovals in the North America and the first one in the United States.

With 97,000 square feet of ice surface requiring 99 miles of subfloor piping to keep ice temperature at 21-24 degrees F and, at same time, maintaining air temperature in a range of 56-62 degrees F and 35% humidity, it is an impressive engineering accomplishment. High efficiency LED lighting, integrated, programmable control of refrigeration and HVAC help Pettit Center to use 40% less electricity than ten years ago.

7. Host to Pettit Indoor Marathon Series & 6 Days in Dome-Redux on longest indoor US run track

More than 200 participated in 6 Days in Dome-Redux, including individual World Record in 100-mile event, August 2019. Over 800 runners participated in the 10th Pettit Center indoor marathon, half marathons, and marathon relay in February 2019. A wider, more cushioned 443-meter track plus cross training area was installed in June 2013 for enhanced use by running clubs, college teams, & tens of thousands of joggers/walkers.

6. Five-time Olympic Gold Medalist Bonnie Blair “answers” your call to the Pettit (414-266-0100).

5. Legacy of Olympic medal winners.

Of the 87 Olympic medals won by US speedskaters, 71 have been won by athletes who have trained or competed at Pettit Center, including Gold Medalists Bonnie Blair Cruikshank, Dan Jansen, and Casey FitzRandolph, plus 2018 Olympians and past medalists Shani Davis, Mia Manganello, Brittany Bowe and Brian Hansen.

4. Easily accessible in SE Wisconsin and highly visible to 36 million cars annually along Interstate 94.

Highly visible in its location along I-94 and adjacent to Wisconsin State Fair, the Center provides impactful positioning for sponsor signage, while being efficiently reached by its users and visitors.

3. Schools on Ice (SOI) teaches 2nd/3rd grade students to ice skate in a grant-supported, instructor-led, five-lesson process.

Nearly 690 students in 2018-9 from 6 qualified need-based schools. Transportation, instruction, & rental skates are included. Students have fun, gain confidence, and learn a lifelong healthy skill.

2. Center for developmental and competitive skating and hockey for youths and adults of all abilities.

Eight youth hockey and figure skating organizations, 70 adult hockey teams (male and female teams), involving over 1,400 hockey games, 1,175 practices, and 2,185 hours of figure skating practice time. We hosted nearly 5,000 youths & adults from 107 schools and scout groups, plus hundreds for recreational curling sessions.

1. Unique venue for lifelong skating-related exercise, recreation, and instruction for seniors, families, student groups, youths, and adults, plus non-skating activities, e.g., run/walk, curling & pickle ball.

Nearly 14,000 individuals ice skated or used run/walk track during 2018-19 Christmas-New Year’s holiday and annually more than 92,000 participate. In addition, the Pettit Center’s Skating School, one of the largest in the US, taught 2,111 youths and adults in fiscal 2018.