



KIM REYNOLDS
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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May 4, 2021

Brian Hardin, Director of Athletics
Drake University
2507 University Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50311

Dear Director Hardin,

Thank you for once again agreeing to host this month's Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union (IGHSAU) State Track & Field Championships. Each year, this event serves as the pinnacle of athletic achievement for many high school students. The memories made at this competition cannot be replaced.

It has come to my attention that Drake University is considering imposing a capacity restriction at the Track & Field Championships. This restriction caps attendance at around 33% of the massive outdoor venue's capacity. (Compare to a 26% cap for *indoor* state high school basketball this past February.) This capacity restriction prevents parents, spectators, and competitors from taking part in a storied Iowa tradition. And most importantly, this capacity restriction defies all logic and common sense of what we know—and have learned—about COVID-19.

All across the country, outdoor sporting events have been conducted safely and effectively without imposing arbitrary capacity limits. Texans have returned to watching baseball in person, and Kentuckians cheered on their horses at the Derby this past weekend. Nebraska will hold its State Track & Field Championships on the same dates as our Iowa event—without capacity limits. Americans have learned how to adapt to the ever-changing landscape of pandemic response. So, too, I trust Iowans to make decisions in the best interest of their own health and the health of those around them.

To be clear, the State's Proclamation of Public Health Disaster Emergency contains no capacity limits for gatherings of any kind. And the IHSAA and IGHSAU have bent over backward to institute reasonable public health measures to ensure the health and safety of anyone in attendance. I understand it is your decision whether to impose arbitrary capacity limits. But if you do, somewhere in Iowa, a mother will learn she cannot watch her daughter run a relay or throw a discus because Drake University decided that an outdoor stadium was not safe enough.

I strongly encourage you to consider this letter when deciding whether Drake University will institute capacity limits at the State Track & Field Championships this month.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Reynolds".

Kim Reynolds
Governor of Iowa

cc: Marty Martin, President of Drake University Jean Berger, Executive Director (IGHSAU)
Tom Keating, Executive Director (IHSAA) Polk County Public Health Department