



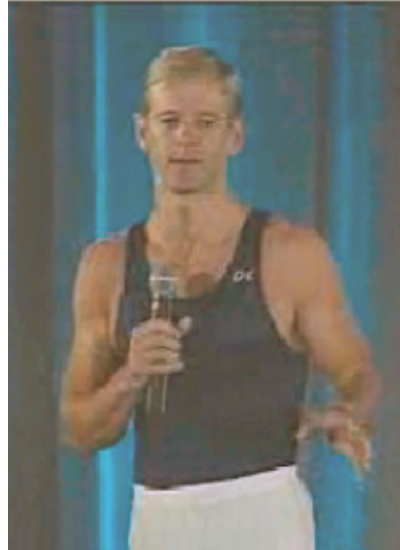
Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 11, 2011

## U.S. Olympic Official Resigns Over Traditional Marriage Views

Peter Vidmar (left), the two-time Olympic gold medal gymnast who had been chosen as the Chief of Mission for the 2012 United States Olympic team, has resigned his position after his pro-family views and support for traditional marriage raised the ire of homosexual activists and Olympians.

Vidmar, who was appointed in late April as the liaison between the American Olympic team, the International Olympic Committee, and the organizers of the London Olympics, "said he resigned because he did not want his personal views to overshadow the athletes," reported the [New York Times](#).

"The sooner we can get back to helping focus on London and our athletes, the better," the *Times* quoted him as e-mailing reporters.



Criticism rose over the selection of Vidmar, who is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon), after it was revealed that he was opposed to same-sex marriage and had financially supported California's successful Prop 8 ballot measure defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

While Vidmar had emphasized that his views would not impact his relationship with the U.S. Olympic team, his appointment incited angry responses from some athletes, such as openly homosexual figure skater Johnny Weir, who told the *Chicago Tribune* that Vidmar's appointment was disgraceful. "I certainly wouldn't want to be represented by someone who is anti-gay marriage," said Weir. "It isn't just about marriage; it is about being allowed equal rights as Americans."

Vidmar, 49, who won two gold medals at the 1984 Olympics and is now the chairman of USA Gymnastics, said in a press release that he had dedicated his life to the ideals of the Olympics and did not want distractions caused by his convictions to impact the U.S. Olympic team in London. "I simply cannot have my presence become a detriment to the U.S. Olympic family," he said. "I hope that by stepping aside, the athletes and their stories will rightly take center stage."

In reacting to Vidmar's resignation, Scott Blackmun, CEO of the U.S. Olympic Committee, noted that "Peter is respected the world over for his dedication and commitment to the Olympic movement and is rightly considered one of America's great Olympic champions. I believe Peter would have served our athletes well, but given the nature of this issue, I certainly respect his decision to resign."

When Vidmar had first been selected to the position, Blackmun, who had been aware of Vidmar's convictions on behalf of traditional marriage, had said that "Peter is a tireless advocate for sport in this country and someone who has inspired many with his successes in the world of sport. That is why we



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chose him as our chief for the London Games. We respect Peter's right to religious freedom, and we understand and respect the fact that many Americans do not share his views."

Maggie Gallagher of the pro-family National Organization for Marriage, told Focus on the Family's [CitizenLink](#) that the homosexual activist network has one agenda, and whoever gets in its way can expect to be vilified. "Simply because he donated to Prop. 8, he was declared by the gay rights movement to be unacceptable for public office," Gallagher said. "This is a campaign to stigmatize, marginalize, and repress faith communities' views on marriage."

She added that the situation forced Vidmar to take a look at what he might lose by sticking around to fight and decided it was better to throw in the towel. "Peter Vidmar is one of the leading corporate motivational speakers," Gallagher said. "That's how he makes a living. When the gay rights movement decided to go after him, he recognized that his entire career, his entire livelihood, could be severely damaged."



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