



Statement of Kerry Perry
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*Hearing before the
United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation,
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security
“Strengthening and Empowering U.S. Amateur Athletes: Moving Forward with
Solutions”*

July 24, 2018

Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Blumenthal, members of the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance and Data Security, thank you for inviting me to testify today.

I want to commend the Subcommittee for its excellent work aimed at protecting amateur athletes from abuse. This is your third hearing in the series, and it is incredibly important, because today we focus on what we are doing to provide a safe and empowered environment for our athletes. As I have said before the House, I will say again today; on behalf of USA Gymnastics, I apologize to our athletes and everyone who was hurt by Larry Nassar. What he did to these incredibly brave women is unconscionable. As the new leader of this organization, I refuse to let any of our survivors, our athletes from the past, our athletes today, or our athletes tomorrow to be defined by the actions of one despicable human being. We have a responsibility to all of our athletes and an opportunity to demonstrate that we are committed to transforming to a highly empowered organization, one where all of our athletes have a voice and are part of a future that all can be very proud of. To that end, USA Gymnastics is moving forward

with a strong commitment to safety with a smarter, more focused governance and organizational structure; new policies and procedures that are designed to help prevent, spot, and punish misconduct; creating a culture that encourages speaking up; and providing our athletes with a new place to train.

I joined USA Gymnastics in December 2017 from outside the sport and the Olympic movement. My primary focus is to transform USA Gymnastics into an athlete-centric organization with a supportive and empowering culture that helps our athletes achieve their gymnastics dreams in a safe environment. I have heard the heart-wrenching stories of the courageous athletes who have been harmed by coaches, doctors, and adults they should have been able to trust. I commit to you that I will keep their words and experiences at the core of every decision I make, every day, as the leader of this organization. Their stories have broken my heart, but also strengthened my resolve.

USA Gymnastics is on a new path, with new leadership, and a commitment to implement a culture that puts athletes first. To that end, we are working hard to regain the trust and confidence of our athletes, their families, and all who are a part of the gymnastics community. Here are just a few of our decisive actions to put USA Gymnastics on a new course:

- **We closed the National Team Training Center** at the Karolyi Ranch, and we have sought and received information on a new training facility. We will soon issue requests for proposals as part of our aggressive effort to find a new permanent training and wellness facility.
- **We hired a new High Performance Training Coordinator for the Women's Program** through a selection process that involved both athletes and coaches. Tom Forster, the new coordinator, believes in coaching through inspiration.

- **We created an Athlete Task Force** where our former athletes are helping to shape our organization's future in its strategic and operating decisions, including participating in the process to identify the new permanent training and wellness center. Just last week, we announced the five core members, one of whom is a survivor of sexual abuse.
- **We expanded our Safe Sport department** to include seven new positions; five of which will live in the regions they cover throughout the United States to better support, train, educate and serve members.
- **We are extensively revising our Safe Sport Policy** with input from representatives throughout our gymnastics community. You will see results from this effort by late summer.
- **We are incorporating expert ideas and strategies** to enhance our Safe Sport education and create a best-in-class, customized curriculum.
- **We are educating and training our staff, Board, and members on the new Safe Sport Policy and a new Ethical Code of Conduct.** I am pleased to report that our staff and Board are 100 percent compliant with both. Beginning this season, all professional and club members must be Safe Sport certified as a condition of membership.
- **We fully support both the U.S. Olympic Committee and Congressional independent investigations** that we hope will shed light on how Larry Nassar was able to commit these horrific crimes so that we can ensure this never happens again.
- **We fully support federal legislation**—now a law—that will help safeguard amateur athletes.

- **We continue to implement the Deborah Daniels recommendations** stemming from an independent evaluation of USA Gymnastics’ policies. As of today, eighty-six percent of the recommendations are either implemented or in progress—and we intend to implement all of them.
- **We made reporting of abuse easier** with a dedicated toll-free number (833-844-SAFE), email address (safesport@usagym.org), and online reporting.
- **We have and will continue to amend our bylaws** to support the cultural commitment to athlete safety and provide a basis for further developing our safe sport programs and governance, including by:
 - Mandating compliance with the policies and procedures of the U.S. Center for SafeSport;
 - Acknowledging that the U.S. Center for Safe Sport has exclusive jurisdiction over all complaints of sexual misconduct;
 - Instituting interim measures to protect the community during ongoing investigations; and
 - The establishment of a standing Safe Sport Committee.
- **We are continuing our Listening Forums and outreach** to as many of our survivors, athletes and member clubs as possible to help guide USA Gymnastics policies and procedures.
- **We made important structural and staff changes and reorganized the Board of Directors** in order to have a streamlined and more focused group of leaders aligned with USA Gymnastics’ cultural transformation.
- **We are participating in mediation** in order to resolve the athletes’ claims fairly and expeditiously.

- **We created an Athlete Assistance Fund**, in cooperation with the National Gymnastics Foundation, that provides the survivors of abuse with the needed financial resources for counseling and medical services.

These necessary changes are part of a cultural shift that reflects our commitment to prioritize the safety of all our athletes and members. They also reflect our commitment to becoming the standard-bearer for change.

As I have traveled the country, listening to athletes, parents, and coaches, one thing has stood out to me. I am inspired every day by the stories of how gymnastics has changed their lives in such a positive way. There are a lot of really great people volunteering their time each and every day to make lasting memories for our athletes. My mission is to ensure that USA Gymnastics emerges as a stronger, more empowered organization that is focused on our athletes, so that generations to come will be able to share their stories of how gymnastics positively impacted their lives.

I am testifying today on behalf of the new USA Gymnastics. We have taken decisive action to grow into a more athlete-centered organization, committed to helping our athletes fulfill their dreams. Our incredible athletes have always been, and will continue to be, a great source of national pride. We will be there for them to help them realize their potential in a safe and supportive environment. Athlete safety must be at the forefront of everything we do, every day.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer your questions.