



Statement of Kerry Perry
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*Hearing before the
House Committee on Energy and Commerce,
Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations*
“Examining the Olympic Community’s Ability to Protect Athletes from Sexual Abuse”

May 23, 2018

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member DeGette, members of the Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today at this very important hearing. For more than fifty years, USA Gymnastics has served as the national governing body for the sport in the United States. We have many responsibilities to the gymnastics community—NONE more important than the safety and well-being of our athletes. Like all of you, I was appalled and sickened by the despicable crimes of Larry Nassar. We must do better.

I came on board at USA Gymnastics in December from outside the sport and the Olympic movement. My singular goal—and the reason I accepted this mission—is to create a supportive and empowering culture that helps our athletes achieve their gymnastics dreams in a safe environment.

First, I want to apologize to all who were harmed by the horrific acts of Larry Nassar. I was in the courtroom to listen to the incredibly courageous women explain in vivid and painful detail the damage he did to their lives. Their powerful voices will not be forgotten. 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.

Let there be no mistake; those days are over. USA Gymnastics is on a new path, with new leadership, and a commitment to ensure this never happens again.

Since December 2017, we have embarked on a mission 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.

In the past five months, 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.
- **We made difficult personnel decisions** to ensure that USA Gymnastics has a fresh start.
- **We fully support both the U.S. Olympic Committee and Congressional independent investigations** that we hope will shed light on how Nassar was able to commit these horrific crimes.
- **We fully support federal legislation**—now a law—that will help safeguard amateur athletes.
- **We expanded our Safe Sport department** to include five new positions; four of which will live in the regions they cover throughout the United States to better support, train, educate and serve members.
- **We created an Athlete Task Force** where our athletes will help shape our organization's future in its strategic and operating decisions.
- **We continue to implement the Deborah Daniels recommendations** stemming from an independent evaluation of USA

Gymnastics' policies. As of today, we have implemented eighty percent of the policies—and we intend to implement all of them.

- **We are strongly enforcing the USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy** that:
 - Requires mandatory reporting;
 - Defines specific types of misconduct;
 - Sets standards to prohibit grooming behavior and prevent inappropriate interaction; and
 - Establishes greater accountability.
- **We made reporting of abuse easier** with a dedicated toll-free number (833-844-SAFE), email address (safesport@usagym.org) and online reporting.
- **We are amending the 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;
 - Granting exclusive jurisdiction to the U.S. Center for SafeSport 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 are incorporating expert ideas and strategies** to enhance our safe sport education and create a best-in-class curriculum customized to fit the varying member groups.
- **We are educating and training our staff, Board, and members on the new Safe Sport Policy.** I am pleased to report that our staff and Board are 100 percent Safe Sport compliant. Beginning in 2018, all professional and club members must be Safe Sport certified as a condition of membership.
- **We reorganized the Board of Directors** in order to have a smaller, more active 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 hope to participate in further mediation in August and that the U.S. Olympic Committee will join us.
- **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 not just amendments to our policies and procedures; they are part of a cultural shift that reflects our commitment to prioritize the safety of all our athletes and members. We will hold our organization to the highest standards of care, and I am committed to making bold decisions in order to become the standard-bearer for change. We are at a very important crossroads for our sport. We have the opportunity to further build an environment that empowers and supports our athletes as they develop the confidence, character and life skills that will allow them to succeed in this amazing sport.

Our incredible athletes have always been, and will continue to be, a great source of national pride. USA Gymnastics is committed to our athletes and to investing in making gymnastics a sport where gymnasts of all abilities can train and compete without

fear of abuse of any sort. Right now, there is a parent driving their child to a gymnastics class. I want that parent to know that we are doing everything we can to protect their child. We need our member clubs and their coaches, the athletes and their parents, and the entire gymnastics community to join with us. Athlete safety must be at the forefront of everything we do, every day.

CONCLUSION

I am testifying today, for the first time, 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. We will be there for them to help them realize their potential in a safe and supportive environment. Out of respect for those who have stood on the podium under the United States flag, and out of devotion to the aspiring young athletes who set foot in gyms every day, we must, and we will, emerge stronger and safer.

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