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JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE,
[SENIOR HOUSE DEMOCRAT]



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-3212

January 25, 2018

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The Honorable Trey Gowdy
Chair
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform
2471 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Gowdy and Ranking Member Cummings,

Like all Americans, I am absolutely horrified by the abuses committed by former USA Gymnastics and Michigan State University Gymnastics team doctor Lawrence G. Nassar against more than 160 women and girls over nearly 20 years. The gruesome nature of these crimes and large number of victims make Mr. Nassar one of the worst sexual abusers and child molesters our country has ever seen. Making matters worse is the fact that as Mr. Nassar was assaulting our athletes, those in positions of authority over him did nothing to stop it, and in some cases, enabled the abuse to continue. Given USA Gymnastics, the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC), and Michigan State University's shocking failure to keep these athletes safe, I write to request that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform immediately initiate an investigation into how all of these organizations allowed these horrific abuses of innocent children by Mr. Nassar to not only happen in the first place, but to continue for close to two decades.

While Mr. Nassar has been brought to justice, albeit belatedly, we must investigate the systemic failure that enabled him to commit these horrific abuses over so many years, and ensure that the necessary changes are made to protect all students, athletes, and patients in the future. Mr. Nassar's trial was only the first phase in finding justice. We owe each of his victims, and every young athlete in these programs, a thorough and comprehensive investigation.

The USOC is a federally chartered non-profit organization authorized by Congress and our Committee has a responsibility to oversee its activities, especially the safety of the athletes who compete under its umbrella. This responsibility also applies to the activities of the forty-seven National Governing Bodies (NGBs), including USA Gymnastics, and the four High Performance Management Organizations (HPMOs) that fall under the USOC umbrella. All told, thousands of athletes compete at events sponsored by the USOC, NGBs and HPMOs every year; while competitive success is important, it is certainly not more important than the safety and well-

being of our athletes. We cannot allow the pursuit of gold medals to eclipse these organizations' responsibility to these athletes and their safety.

While much attention is understandably focused on Mr. Nassar and his crimes, we must also examine the larger system that allowed these acts to happen and so greatly failed these young women. The Indianapolis Star, which first broke the story about Mr. Nassar's overwhelming abuse, found, through review of hundreds of police files and court cases across the country, "at least 368 gymnasts have alleged some form of sexual abuse at the hands of their coach, gym owners, or other adults working in gymnastics." The investigation found that "top officials at USA Gymnastics... failed to alert police to many allegations... that occurred on their watch and stashed complaints in files that have been kept secret ... [and]... predatory coaches were allowed to move from gym to gym, undetected by a lax system of oversight, or dangerously passed on by USA Gymnastics-certified gyms."ⁱ

It is disgraceful that these incidents were overlooked by the USOC and USA Gymnastics for so many years, harming young athletes who were competing at the most elite level of their sport representing the United States of America. Not only was there clearly a systemic failure at both organizations to protect our athletes, but we also know of at least one instance where USA Gymnastics tried to cover up these allegations: the Non-Disclosure Agreement signed by McKayla Maroney in her settlement with USA Gymnastics over abuse by Mr. Nassar.ⁱⁱ

As a result of these massive failures, I have no confidence in the USOC or USA Gymnastics' ability to protect our athletes from abuses even now. In her profound victim impact statement, six-time Olympic gold medalist Aly Raisman said that USA Gymnastics is "rotting from the inside."ⁱⁱⁱ In light of these reports, I cannot disagree. Congress must conduct a thorough investigation and bring both accountability and justice to this situation and to those who have been victims of it.

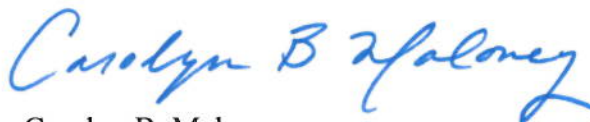
As a non-profit, state-sponsored institute of higher education, Michigan State University receives federal and state funding. Our Committee, and this Congress, have a responsibility to investigate Mr. Nassar's tenure at the university and how this institution failed its students. We cannot begin to understand how to prevent such horrors in the future if we do not understand how they were allowed to happen in the first place. Those who were in power to stop this monster, and did not, must be held accountable.

In 2005, this Committee conducted hearings about illegal steroid use by Major League Baseball players. More recently, the Committee on Energy & Commerce and the Committee on the Judiciary have investigated the prevalence of concussions in the NFL. When conduct by professional athletes and organizational responses have presented significant public health concerns, Congress has taken a particular interest in bringing those issues to light. Although Mr. Nassar has been tried and sentenced for his crimes, we must ensure that USA Gymnastics, the USOC, and Michigan State University are held accountable for failing to prevent this long

pattern of abuse and root out any other cases of sexual abuse or child molestation that may have occurred under their umbrellas.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

ⁱ <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/2016/12/15/20-year-toll-368-gymnasts-allege-sexual-exploitation/95198724/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/usa-gymnastics-reached-settlement-over-abuse-claims-with-gold-medalist-mckayla-maroney-1513791179>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/20/sports/full-text-of-aly-raismans-statement.html>