

ORAL TESTIMONY

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**Conducted by the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations**

Testimony of Travis T. Tygart

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Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, good morning. My name is Travis T. Tygart and I am the CEO of the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA). Thank you for your interest in clean sport and for the invitation to appear before you today.

We find ourselves at a critical juncture for the **soul of sport**. Fairness and integrity in athletic competition — two principles at the very heart of why we play sports — hang in the balance.

You just heard powerful testimony from Adam Nelson and Michael Phelps on why this matters. We view clean athletes — and their powerful stories — as our guiding light, our North Star. Their stories give us hope, and they provide us the fuel to continue to advocate for their right to clean and fair competition.

In order to do this, we must understand how and why the system is under threat. There is no timelier example than the uncovering of Russia's widespread, state-supported doping system.

Over 1,000 Russian athletes from over 30 sports have been implicated in this drug program that was proven to have been orchestrated by Russian officials. At least, two Olympics Games were corrupted, and at the Rio Games, scores of Russian athletes competed despite not being subject to credible anti-doping programs.

When the moment came, despite mountains of evidence and vocal opposition from clean athletes, the **IOC chose to welcome** the Russian Olympic Committee to Rio, and **did not** enforce any meaningful sanctions.

The IOC missed — or ignored — a defining moment to confront, in the

clearest way possible, the win-at-all-costs culture of doping in global sport. It was a chance to draw an unambiguous line in the sand; to stand up for clean athletes.

Despite this, two silver linings have emerged.

The first: More than ever before athletes are mobilizing, voicing their opinions and fighting for a level playing field.

And second: We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to disrupt entrenched positions for the good to make sure this kind of state-supported doping – is never again allowed to rear its ugly head.

To get there... the road to reform starts and frankly ends with independence.

We have long advocated for a clear separation between those who promote sport and those who police it. To do otherwise, is to have the fox guard the henhouse. You can't both promote and police.

We along with, 22 other National Anti-Doping Agencies (NADOs) from around the world support a strong and independent WADA. But, we also agree its current governance structure hamstrings its effectiveness. WADA needs reform to become a truly independent, global regulator, not merely the sport service organization many hope it remains.

The good news, Mr. Chairman, is that WADA's conflicted governance model could be easily solved by removing sport leaders from the WADA Board. Take off the blindfold and handcuffs and let WADA do the job it should be doing for clean athletes.

I read the testimony of both Richard and Rob. Let me preface this by saying that we know both of them well – and on a personal level respect them immensely for their efforts to fight for change within the system.

But, today they are simply carrying out instructions for their bosses who aren't here – unfortunately.

In regard to their positions – we agree with much of it. In fact, that's why national anti-doping agencies, including USADA, implemented many of the same strategies years ago. But unfortunately, their submissions are silent on the crux of the reform solution – which is to remove the fox from hen house.

In our world, we hear about that a lot: The fox and the henhouse. You'll see quite clearly, that while the IOC and WADA may be advocating to deputize the fox, educate the fox and even equip the fox with the necessary resources – it's STILL the fox.

There is STILL a conflict of interest. And clean athletes around the world are STILL being let down by sport's control over critical anti-function functions.

I also feel obligated to address very briefly to what the IOC refers to as “national interests.” When we hear that term, it's important to understand what it really means in this context. It is essentially, a recently-discovered excuse – a talking point – used by the IOC to justify its unwillingness to hold the Russian doping system accountable. At its core, it's essential, painting the world with the same corrupt Russian brush.

It is not in our “national interest” to dope athletes and cheat the world – that's

simply not true. Our interest is the exact opposite!

What is so frustrating for us at USADA and for the athletes we serve, is that the solutions are relatively easy, but the determination to implement them is lacking.

Yet, we remain optimistic: National anti-doping organizations from around the world have put forth specific proposals to fix the system which are outlined in the “Copenhagen Reform Declaration”:

- 1) Remove sports control of anti-doping.
- 2) Strengthen WADA through improved independence, transparency and increased investment.
- 3) Increase and make clear WADA’s ability to investigate, monitor compliance and impose sanctions.
- 4) Provide the opportunity for athletes who have been robbed to have meaningful recognition, including the swift reallocation of any medals.
- 5) Increase support for whistleblowers around the world.

Mr. Chairman, for those who value the rights of clean athletes – this is our moment.

This is not just about elite Olympic athletes, but about every child on a playground who has an Olympic dream and asks “what do I have to do to make my dreams come true?” The truth is, if we don't push, if we don't win, we will likely find ourselves back in this same position, years from now, staring another state-supported doping system in the face – one that has abused its own athletes, and robbed another generation of clean athletes in the process.

And, we will all be wondering why we didn't do more when we had the chance.