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ARIZONA

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON
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COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
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United States Senate

May 25, 2016

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The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation
Room 512, Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation
Room 425, Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

Last November, an Independent Commission (IC) of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) released a troubling report exposing an elaborate Russian state-sponsored doping scheme aimed to drive Russian success in the Sochi Olympic Games. The investigation was launched following whistleblower reports and a documentary about the prevalent use of performance-enhancing drugs among Russian track and field athletes. Over 300 pages long, the report reveals systematic doping by athletes, aided by coaches, doctors, and the very officials tasked with keeping sports clean.

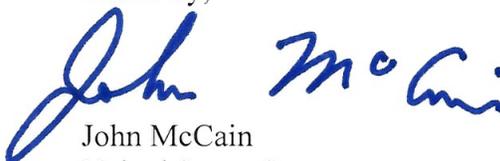
The IC report identifies a “deeply rooted culture of cheating” in Russian sports encouraged and facilitated by the Russian government. That report and the details that have emerged since its release revealed shadow laboratories, intimidation by Russian security forces, dark-of-night operations, destroyed samples, bribery, and cover-up by government officials. These details, while fitting for a Soviet-era spy novel, have no place in the revered athletic traditions of the Olympic Games. Last week, it was reported that the U.S. Department of Justice is investigating whether the doping scheme undertaken by Russian officials included violations of federal criminal law.

I write to request that you hold a hearing in the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation to examine the ongoing implications of Russian state-sponsored doping and its impact on American athletes, the public interest, and the future and integrity of international sports competitions. A hearing could examine how to protect U.S. athletes from the safety risks inherent in institutionalized doping among competitors and steps that can be taken to ensure these athletes are competing on a level playing field. This would also be an opportunity to examine the roles and responsibilities of the international organizations established to oversee clean competition in athletics, as well as the U.S. government’s role in supporting those organizations.

The international community must ensure accountability for culpable athletes and the Russian government. With the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio quickly approaching, questions remain about Russia's participation in the games and whether the nation will face consequences for systematic doping. Furthermore, revelations about state-sponsored doping raise doubts about Russia's ability to serve as host of the World Cup in 2018, a role already recognized as an unacceptable economic and diplomatic win for Vladimir Putin at this time.

Publicly examining how these matters can be resolved is important to U.S. athletes who have played by the rules and is vital to the future of clean competition and to public trust in international athletic competitions. I hope you will consider convening a hearing on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John McCain". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

John McCain
United States Senator