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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

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November 15, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

The United States Center for SafeSport (SafeSport) opened its doors in March 2017. A year later, Congress formally designated the organization with protecting amateur athletes from abuse and investigating misconduct complaints in amateur sports, under the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-126).

Among its major provisions, that 2018 statute calls for SafeSport to exercise jurisdiction over the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC), each National Governing Body (NGB) certified by the USOPC, and each Paralympic sports organization “with regard to safeguarding amateur athletes against abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, in sports.” It also calls for SafeSport to respond to, investigate, and resolve complaints of sexual abuse and “provide fair notice and an opportunity to be heard and protect the privacy and safety of complainants.”

To date, we have seen no reason to question SafeSport’s commitment to fulfilling its statutory duties in a responsible manner. The organization has received hundreds of complaints from amateur athletes since its inception, while financial contributions to the organization have increased significantly in recent years. Meanwhile, legislation also has been introduced in this chamber, under which the Center would receive a permanent funding stream of approximately \$20 million annually.

Because SafeSport now plays a key role in ensuring the safety of amateur athletes—many of whom are minors—I request that the GAO conduct a review on the effectiveness of SafeSport in responding to, investigating, and resolving complaints of misconduct in amateur athletic activities. Specifically, I request that GAO:

- 1) Provide a detailed description of SafeSport's activities in each of the last three calendar years, including:
 - a) the number and nature of misconduct complaints referred to SafeSport; the total number and type of pending misconduct complaints under investigation by SafeSport;
 - b) the number of misconduct complaints for which an investigation was terminated or otherwise closed by SafeSport; and
 - c) the number of such misconduct complaints reported to law enforcement agencies by SafeSport for further investigation.
- 2) Examine the adequacy of the intake and investigation practices of SafeSport in response to complaints or misconduct in amateur athletic events, and the extent to which such practices and policies are followed by SafeSport personnel;
- 3) Analyze the adequacy of SafeSport's training policies and procedures to ensure due process for individuals against whom such complaints have been lodged, and the extent to which such training practices and policies are followed by SafeSport personnel; and
- 4) Offer recommendations for Congress regarding appropriate legislative responses, if any, that could help the Olympic and Paralympic community better respond to the unique vulnerabilities of amateur athletes who have experienced abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, in amateur athletic activities.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Evelyn Fortier or Rachael Soloway of my Committee staff at (202) 224-4515.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on Finance