

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6275

October 1, 2021

By Electronic Transmission

Ken Wong, Chairman, Board of Directors
Linda French, Chief Executive Officer
USA Badminton
9255 Telstar Avenue, Unit I
El Monte, California 91731

Dear Mr. Wong and Ms. French:

I write concerning reports that the Committee on the Judiciary received from the United States Center for SafeSport (the Center) about allegations of child sex abuse within USA Badminton, and allegations that USA Badminton is interfering with the Center’s investigation of the matter.

First and foremost, Congress takes seriously the sexual abuse of amateur athletes by those entrusted with their training and care. Our Committee’s recent hearing on the sexual abuse of Olympic gymnasts by a former national team physician, Lawrence Nassar, underscores this point.

With my support, Congress has recently enacted laws to protect amateur athletes from abuse. The Empowering Olympic, Paralympic, and Amateur Athletes Act of 2020 (“The Act”), *see* 36 U.S.C. § 220541 *et seq.*, establishes safeguards to protect amateur athletes from abuse, including sexual abuse, by coaches and employees in U.S. Olympic and Paralympic sports. National governing bodies (NGBs) like USA Badminton have a duty to protect amateur athletes from sexual abuse, and they must *report immediately* any reasonable suspicion of child sexual abuse to *both* law enforcement and the Center. *See* 36 U.S.C. § 220542(a)(2)(A).

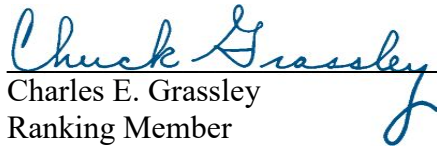
The Act also gives the Center authority to investigate within each NGB allegations of sexual abuse against amateur athletes, *see* 36 U.S.C. § 220541(a)(1), and the law prohibits NGBs from interfering in any investigation, *see* 36 U.S.C. § 220541(f)(4)(A) (“[T]he national governing bodies shall not interfere in, or attempt to influence the outcome of, an investigation.”). The law further requires that the Center report to Congress any interference, *see* 36 U.S.C. § 220541(f)(4)(B), and, as stated, the Center has reported to us that USA Badminton is interfering with an investigation concerning child sexual abuse.

The reports shared by the Center are very troubling. They allege that USA Badminton leadership and its counsel have (1) discouraged the reporting of criminal sexual misconduct; (2) encouraged the concealment and destruction of evidence on the subject; (3) contested the need to

follow the Act's requirements; and (4) refused to cooperate in the Center's investigation. They also alleges the likelihood of retaliation against a whistleblower. If true, these allegations themselves may be criminal violations.

I therefore write to remind USA Badminton of its obligations under the law. As the Nassar case exemplifies, inaction may lead to many more victims being harmed, which would be intolerable. I have alerted the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) about the Center's concerns, and I strongly urge you to make appropriate contact with state and local law enforcement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Grassley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Cc: Ju'Riese Colon, Chief Executive Officer
United States Center for SafeSport