

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Tim Murphy**  
**Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations**  
**Hearing on “Ways to Improve and Strengthen the International Anti-Doping**  
**System”**  
**February 28, 2017**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

The Subcommittee convenes this hearing today to examine the current state of the international anti-doping system, the challenges it faces, and areas for reform. On the heels of the Summer Games in Rio, and less than a year away from the Winter Games in PyeongChang, there is no better time to evaluate progress made thus far in reforming the international anti-doping system. How fitting that we are holding this hearing on February 28, as we have the greatest Olympic athlete of all time, who has won 28 medals, before us today.

Every two years, Nations are filled with excitement and pride as they cheer on their athletes at the Summer and Winter Games. It has been a long-standing tradition that should not be tarnished by those that choose to cheat. Ultimately, I hope that this hearing helps to highlight ways in which we can strengthen clean competition and restore public confidence in international sports.

Within the anti-doping community, there are concerns regarding organizational structure and how the current system creates an environment where individuals are both policing and promoting sport. Conflicts of interest stemming from the composition of the World Anti-Doping Agency’s (WADA) senior leadership currently exist, as anti-doping decision makers often simultaneously hold a policy-making position within a sports organization. Such conflicts can have both real and

perceived effects on the rigorous investigations of possible violations as well as the enforcement of anti-doping measures.

Several anti-doping experts have publicly stated that WADA lacks sufficient independence from sports itself. Recent proposals have suggested removing sports organizations from governance structures to improve independence and operations. Today, we want to evaluate these concerns and discuss the proposed reforms.

Further, there needs to be an established decision-making process and body when it comes to investigations and sanctions. As we saw leading up to the Summer Games in Rio, the buck was passed multiple times between the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADO), and International Sports Federations (IF), as to who was in charge of making the decision as to whether or not athletes would be allowed to participate in the Summer Games.

Sanctions and bans on athletes, coaches, NADOs, and anti-doping laboratories vary from short-term to lifetime, but there does not appear to be a clear set of guidelines to aid the appropriate organization in setting and imposing consistent penalties. We need to ensure that the system is fair and that the punishment is appropriate, particularly when the athlete knowingly cheated. The general public depends on the governing bodies of international sports to ensure that cheating does not become the accepted norm – this is a particularly important message for our youth.

Additionally, recent events highlight the need to examine potential improvements with respect to utilizing athletes as partners in the anti-doping effort as well as

whistleblower protections. There will always be athletes or institutions that dope in an attempt to gain a competitive advantage. Athletes and whistleblowers are often times the first to see the problems at the ground level and are critical to anti-doping organizations' ability to identify and investigate violations. Therefore, it bears questioning whether the current system does enough to encourage, embrace, and protect those fighting for clean sport.

While many summits, conferences, and meetings have occurred since the Rio Games, challenges, including but not limited to the ones I previously mentioned, remain and progress towards meaningful reform remains unclear. This hearing provides an opportunity to learn from past mistakes and examine opportunities to move forward in a way that will improve the international anti-doping system so that it is effective, fair, and nimble for the sake of athletes, clean sport, and the integrity of the International competition, including the Olympic Games.

We welcome our all-star panel of witnesses today. Your appearance before the Subcommittee is vital for us to have an honest discussion with key decision makers. We are also excited to have Mr. Phelps and Mr. Nelson with us today to share the athlete's perspective. These gentlemen have competed at the highest level and have invaluable insight into the problems and challenges that face the current system as well as a unique perspective on improvements that can be made. I would like to thank our witnesses for appearing today, and look forward to an informative discussion.