

As U.S. athletes prepare to compete in the Paris Olympics a cloud of uncertainty hangs over the reliability of international anti-doping enforcement which is supposed to eliminate the use of certain performance enhancing drugs. This Committee has been alarmed to learn from news reports that several swimmers representing the People's Republic of China tested positive for banned performance enhancing substances and then went on to compete in the 2021 Tokyo Olympics.¹

Just last week, eleven of these swimmers were again named to the People's Republic of China's 2024 Olympic team.² All of this comes after the World Anti-Doping Agency or WADA, ignored signs of systemic Russian doping for years.³

Seven years ago, this Oversight subcommittee, held a hearing on ways to strengthen the international anti-doping system. It is unfortunate that we are here again.

Two witnesses from that 2017 hearing are back with us today— premier Olympian, Mr. Michael Phelps and the CEO of the United States Anti-Doping Agency, or USADA, Mr. Travis Tygart.

We are also pleased to welcome another outstanding Olympic swimmer, Ms. Allison Schmitt, to join us today so we can revisit doping in sports ahead of next month's Summer Olympics.

I want to start off by reminding everyone of what Mr. Phelps told us seven years ago, because it bears repeating.

¹ [06.19.24 Time Magazine: Over a Third of China's Paris Olympics Swimming Roster Tied to Doping Scandal](#)

² [06.19.24 NBC News: China names 11 doping scandal swimmers in its Paris Olympics team](#)

³ [06.02.16 Washington Post: WADA heard of Russian doping in 2010, didn't investigate until media reports](#)

He said:

[QUOTE] If we allow our confidence in fair play to erode, we will undermine the power of sport and the goals and dreams of future generations. The time to act is now. [END QUOTE]⁴

I'm glad Mr. Phelps highlighted the damage performance enhancing drugs has on our country's youth athletes and am disappointed that Wah-Duh has not seemed to heed that call.

Children join sports teams and clubs believing that the system is mostly fair and that cheaters will be punished.

The importance of sports for our country's children cannot be understated.

Sports empower children by teaching them life lessons, building their confidence, showing them the meaning of hard work, and offering some of them opportunities to represent our country and make a career. I myself have had the opportunity to see my own children grow and learn from competitive swimming.

In fact, this last week was very exciting in my household, because one year ago, in high school regionals, my son competed against Olympian Thomas Heilman, who at age 17, is the youngest male swimmer to qualify for Team USA since Michael Phelps.

The joke at my house was, that, at one point in the race they were tied, that would be the part where the starter says, "take your mark."

⁴ Transcript, Hearing before H. Energy & Commerce, Subcomm. Oversight & Investigations (Feb. 28, 2017).

Foundational to the Olympics is the trust that clean athletes, both aspiring and current Olympians, have in the system to keep cheaters out.

Doping leads to cynicism in sports and inevitable disappointment for aspiring athletes.

As I'm sure Ms. Schmitt and Mr. Phelps can attest to, we cannot overemphasize the dedication, sacrifices, and training required of our Olympians, competing at the very highest, and what I believe to be the most prestigious, athletic level.

Youth athletes dedicate themselves by putting in countless hours of training, pushing both physical and mental limits in the hopes of one day being an Olympian.

Athletes miss birthdays and holidays to train so that they can achieve success the right way, on their merit. Mr. Phelps has previously said he didn't take a single day off for over a five-year period, just so he could be the best at what he does.⁵

Doping irrevocably undermines the purpose of that sacrifice by allowing competitors who really want all the glory without putting in as much work.

Is it fair that we encourage our youth to invest so much of their time if on the greatest stage consequences are not expected for certain countries' athletes?

That is why I am disappointed that Mr. Banka, the President of WADA, refused our invitation to testify before this Subcommittee today to discuss his role in upholding the integrity of anti-doping testing and enforcement in international sports competitions.

⁵ Transcript, Hearing before H. Energy & Commerce, Subcomm. Oversight & Investigations, p.30 (Feb. 28, 2017).

WADA received nearly 4 million in taxpayer dollars through Congress last fiscal year.⁶ Their refusal to appear today calls into question their commitment to accountability and perhaps if they're not going to do their job, should we even fund them?

Mr. Banka and WADA have hidden today rather than explain how WADA let over twenty swimmers representing the People's Republic of China compete in international competitions after they all tested positive for a banned substance.

Cheating athletes take away spots and medals from clean athletes.

The integrity and sanctity of sports is critical for the Olympians competing but also for the children who dream one day to be an Olympian.

We will keep a seat open for Mr. Banka in case he decides to join us.

I want to thank the three of you who made it here today despite your very busy schedules ahead of the Paris Olympics.

⁶ Congressional Budget Submissions, ONDCP FY 2024 ("The FY 2024 request level for WADA Dues is \$3,700,000. This is an increase of \$280,000 from the FY 2023 enacted level of \$3,420,000. This increase of 8 percent was confirmed in the WADA meeting in May 2022."), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FY-2024-ONDCP-CONGRESSIONAL-BUDGET-SUBMISSION-FINAL.pdf>