

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Testimony of Allison Schmitt for the hearing titled, “Examining Anti-Doping Measures in Advance of the 2024 Olympics.”

Tuesday, June 25, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. (ET) in 2123 Rayburn House Office Building

Ever since I was a little kid, I wanted to do it all. Every sport called my name, and I answered with love and determination. Competing thrilled me; when the spotlight turned on, I came alive. It all began when I was five, the little girl more interested in picking flowers on the soccer field. But by the last game of the season, I was everywhere, scoring three goals. My dad asked, "Allison, what made you play like that today?" I looked him straight in the eye and said, "Well, you brought the camera." I share this story with you because competitiveness is something you're born with—it's not something that comes in a pill or powder form.

Fast forward four years and countless sports later—basketball, volleyball, softball, track, hockey, dance, and swimming—I dreamt of becoming the next Mia Hamm. But those dreams shifted when I didn't make the local travel soccer team. Thank goodness for swimming, a non-cut sport. I wasn't the star, but I had unwavering love and determination. It wasn't until high school that I really began to excel. I made a junior team in 2007, and the following year, I made the 2008 Olympic team, just after graduating high school. It was the thrill of my life—getting to represent your country?! Being on TV?! YES—I was ready. It was a no-brainer for me to sign my privacy and rights away to drug testing if that's what it took for a fair chance to win. Sport had given me so much—opportunities, skills that I used in the classroom and would later carry into the rest of my life. I knew that I got to that stage fair and square—and I genuinely thought everyone else had to. I mean, we were all sacrificing a lot to compete clean, right?!

Well, first Olympics, then world championships, more worlds, and more Olympics—I started becoming more aware of others who didn't seem like they were on the same playing field. An Olympian adding significant muscle in a few months... how? She must be working hard?! Oh, is she, when she comes into the world championships with a lunch box that no one can see inside? Hmmm.

As Olympians, we know the fans watching the Games don't see the full picture. They don't see the forms we fill out to indicate our whereabouts for drug testing at all times, or the fact that we have to pull our shorts below our knees and our shirts up to our chests while someone bends over and watches the pee come out. They don't know about avoiding every topical cream and oral medication because we don't know what's in it—even a cold medicine, just in case it causes a positive test. Or a topical cream to help with our dry skin after hours in the chlorine. Even something as simple as eyelash extenders. We juggle updating the drug testers every hour of our day—all while pushing our bodies to the limit, meeting school demands, and being role models. I've even had a drug tester come sit next to me during a history exam in college because they show up unannounced.

But I do it gladly because fair competition is worth it. This dedication only matters if everyone, including the global regulator, WADA, is equally committed. My love for swimming, my love for sport is pure. I am so grateful for the opportunities, doors it has opened, and invaluable lessons it has taught me about myself and life. I hope that one day my children will be able to experience what I did in sport—but I pray that they will have a fair playing field. That there will be standards for every country across the board.

Throughout my swimming career, we heard whispers of doping by the Chinese team. We knew about their doping scandals from the 1990s. But we tried to block it out and focus on our races. In Tokyo, we lost to China's relay team. If you read my Instagram from July 31st, 2021, I posted a picture of our U.S.

relay on the podium. The caption read, "This was a silver medal well earned. A podium full of 12 athletes under the previous world record. Could not be more proud to be a part of this team." I was genuine. We raced hard. We trained hard. We followed every protocol. We respected their performance and accepted our defeat. But not, learning that the Chinese relay consisted of athletes who had not served a suspension, I look back with doubt. We may never know the truth and that may haunt many of us for years. I honor the values of the Olympic Games—we, as TEAM USA, honor the values of the Olympic Games. Why do we lower the standard and make it acceptable not to value the Olympic Games? Make no mistake the Chinese athletes were let down by the system too. This is no way for them to be treated and we have a lot of compassion for them as athletes. But, the rules must be enforced the same everywhere.

Last week at the U.S. Swimming Olympic Trials, I saw the future of our sport—young men and women ready to represent us. They're frustrated and let down. Their confidence in WADA and the global anti-doping system has crumbled, rightfully so.

I plead, on behalf of U.S. athletes: hold WADA and the global anti-doping system accountable. If we win, let it be because we earned it. And if we lose, let it be because the competition was fair. We need the IOC, NBC, sponsors, and fans to demand integrity in our sport. Fix this, for all of us—for the future kids where ever they are from, who dream of standing on that podium, hearing their national anthem, and feeling the emotions of the hard work they put into it.