

Statement of Ranking Member Doug Collins
Markup of H.R. 835
Rodchenkov Anti-Doping Act of 2019
House Judiciary Committee
Wednesday, October 16, 2019

Amateur and professional sports are an indispensable part of American culture. Every year, Americans spend over \$50 billion on sporting events—and this does not include billions of dollars spent on sports equipment, gym memberships and youth and adult leagues and lessons. Nor does it even approach the revenues generated by advertising, athlete endorsements and broadcast rights of thousands of sporting events each year. The annual total economic impact of sport in the United States is over half a trillion dollars.

In other words, there is a great deal at stake.

Preserving the integrity of leagues, coaches, athletes and

their sponsors is essential. Governments around the world sponsor their athletes in amateur sports, most notably the Olympics. In the recent past, we have sadly seen conspiracies within foreign governments to affect the outcome of sporting events. These conspiracies often involve doping and the use of performance-enhancing drugs. The widespread doping by Russian athletes at the 2014 Winter Olympics led to Russia being banned from the 2018 Winter Olympics. 43 Olympic medals have been stripped from Russia for doping violations. Doping conspiracies usually occur during other crimes, including bribery, distribution of illegal drugs, illegal sports betting and money laundering. State-sponsored criminal actors and transnational criminal organizations are often implicated in these conspiracies.

The bill before us now would enhance America's jurisdiction over international sporting events and supplement existing laws such as the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. As the bill states, doping fraud conspiracies harm clean athletes and their coaches and sponsors. They also defraud the people who pay to watch sporting events and set an extremely poor example for our youth.

Several nations, including Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and Spain, have enacted legislation with criminal and civil sanctions for doping fraud conspiracies. It is time for the United States to add another means by which criminals engaged in doping fraud can be held accountable for their actions and no longer tarnish the honor and image of clean athletes.

This bill is an excellent example of bipartisan efforts. It is also a testament to this committee's ability to work from both sides of the aisle with the executive branch, the Department of Justice and the FBI. Input from all parties has resulted in a well-crafted piece of legislation which will help root out corruption in international sports. As the lead sponsor of several other pieces of bipartisan legislation, I look forward to finding more common ground for the benefit of the American people. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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