Cindy Parlow Cone  
President  
U.S. Soccer Federation  
1801 S. Prairie Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60616

Dear Ms. Cone:

Nearly a year ago, 42 Members of Congress wrote to the U.S. Soccer Federation (USSF) and the National Women’s Soccer League (NWSL) express our serious concern regarding allegations of misconduct against several NWSL coaches. We thank USSF for authorizing an independent investigation into the complaints, led by former acting U.S. Attorney General Sally Yates, and publishing the resulting independent report. As you know, the NWSL and the NWSL Players Association (NWSLPA) are conducting a separate joint investigation that will examine the working environments of all 12 of the teams in the NWSL. We ask that USSF cooperate fully with the joint NWSL-NWSLPA investigation and produce all documents for investigators that were provided to the Yates team.

We are heartened by the recommendations in the Yates report that teams be required to disclose misconduct to NWSL and USSF, that teams designate an individual within each organization who is responsible for player safety and who solicits regular feedback from players, that NWSL maintain its confidential reporting line, and that the scope of a coach’s involvement in players’ lives off the field be limited. We also appreciate the report’s consideration of the role of misconduct in youth soccer programs, which “normalizes verbally abusive coaching and blurs boundaries between coaches and players.” These practices must be penalized, and youth soccer programs restructured, to prevent early establishment of cycles of abuse. We request additional information on USSF’s plan for combatting the issues that the Yates report identifies, as well as a timeline for implementing the report’s recommendations to prevent abuse in the future.

We also want to express concern that certain witnesses never responded to Yates and her team’s request for interviews, with some fearing retaliation if they were to comply; however, we are hopeful that these teams will comply with the joint NWSL-NWSLPA investigation. We urge USSF to seriously consider the apprehensions of these teams and to work to foster a culture of openness and support around discussing and addressing misconduct and abuse. Until individuals experiencing abuse feel comfortable coming forward with complaints or concerns to those in positions of authority, the systemic misconduct described in the report will continue. Only receptiveness to institutional flaws will lead to institutional improvement.

It is obviously unacceptable that players have been subjected to this level of systemic abuse in professional women’s soccer. These exceptional athletes have the right to practice and play the sport they love without threats, coercion, or abuse. The investigation is an important step forward in ensuring women athletes have the protections they deserve, but the work does not stop here.
We look forward to the conclusion of the joint NWSL-NWSLPA investigation and the information it provides.

The sport and the league are clearly in need of systemic reform, and this investigation by the U.S. Soccer Federation, as well as the joint NWSL-NWSLPA investigation, will provide critical insights into the changes required to ensure our athletes can safely continue to bring pride to our nation. We look forward to your swift response on the steps USSF is taking to implement the recommendations in the report, the timeline for such implementation, and a commitment to cooperating with the joint NWSL-NWSLPA investigation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress
Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress
André Carson
Member of Congress

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

David J. Trone
Member of Congress

Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress

Andy Levin
Member of Congress