

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 1, 2022

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



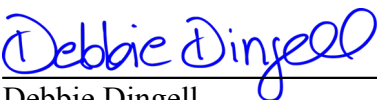
Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress




Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



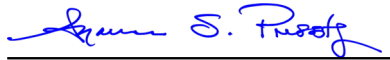
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



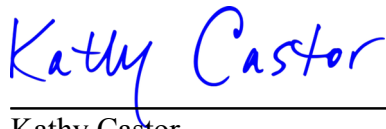
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
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Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



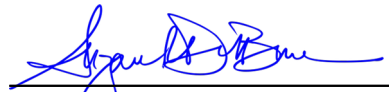
Kathy Castor
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Doris Matsui
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Norma J. Torres
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G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson

Eddie Bernice Johnson
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Barbara Lee

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman

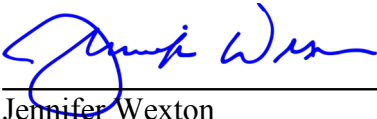
Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
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Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



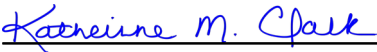
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



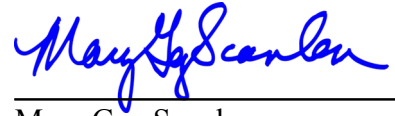
Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress



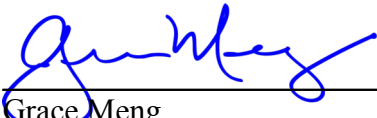
David N. Cicilline
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Katherine M. Clark
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Mary Gay Scanlon
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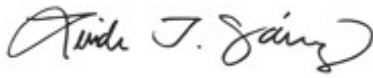
John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



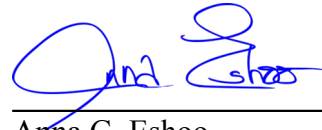
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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Cheri Bustos
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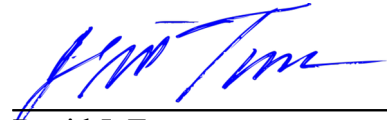
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



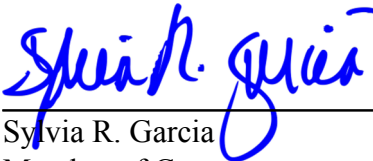
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



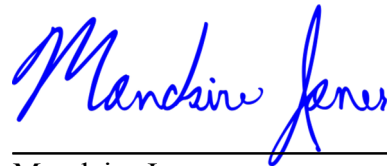
Sheila Jackson Lee
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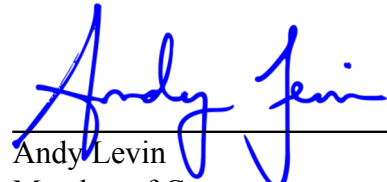
Sylvia R. Garcia
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Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
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Andy Levin
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