

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 27, 2017

Dave Ogrea
Executive Director
USA Hockey
1775 Bob Johnson Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Dear Mr. Ogrea,

As Senators committed to gender equity in all realms of American life, we write to express our serious concern with allegations raised by members of the U.S. Women's National Hockey Team regarding USA Hockey's inequitable allocation of resources to the women's hockey program and unjust treatment of national team members.¹

As you know, the women's team has chosen to boycott the upcoming International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) World Championship games, citing faltering negotiations with USA Hockey regarding equitable pay and resources.² Among other issues, the women note that USA Hockey expects female players to "train full time and compete throughout the year," yet pays them only \$6,000 every four years, an amount that would put them far below the poverty line.³ The women's team is in the process of negotiating a four-year contract with USA Hockey that includes "appropriate compensation."⁴

As the National Governing Body for ice hockey in the United States⁵, USA Hockey is required by the *Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act* to "develop interest and participation throughout the United States" in ice hockey and "be responsible to the persons and amateur sports organizations it represents." USA Hockey is also legally required to "provide

¹ Ballard Spahr, LLP, "U.S. Women's National Hockey Players to Sit Out IIHF World Championships as Negotiations for Equitable Support Falter" (March 15, 2017) (online at <http://www.ballardspahr.com/eventsnews/pressreleases/2017-03-17-us-womens-national-hockey-players-to-sit-out-iihf-world-championships.aspx>).

² Seth Berkman, "U.S. Women's Hockey Team Plans to Boycott World Championship Over Pay Dispute," *New York Times* (March 15, 2017) (online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/15/sports/hockey/team-usa-women-boycott-world-championships.html>).

³ Ballard Spahr, LLP, "U.S. Women's National Hockey Players to Sit Out IIHF World Championships as Negotiations for Equitable Support Falter" (March 15, 2017) (online at <http://www.ballardspahr.com/eventsnews/pressreleases/2017-03-17-us-womens-national-hockey-players-to-sit-out-iihf-world-championships.aspx>); Lindsay Gibbs, "Due to discrimination by USA Hockey, women's team boycotts world championship," *Think Progress* (March 15, 2017) (online at <https://thinkprogress.org/u-s-womens-hockey-team-boycotts-world-championships-over-pay-dispute-101533b59d18#.edtx8ge1p>).

⁴ Ballard Spahr, LLP, "U.S. Women's National Hockey Players to Sit Out IIHF World Championships as Negotiations for Equitable Support Falter" (March 15, 2017) (online at <http://www.ballardspahr.com/eventsnews/pressreleases/2017-03-17-us-womens-national-hockey-players-to-sit-out-iihf-world-championships.aspx>).

⁵ USA Hockey, "About" (online at <http://www.usahockey.com/page/show/836187-about>).

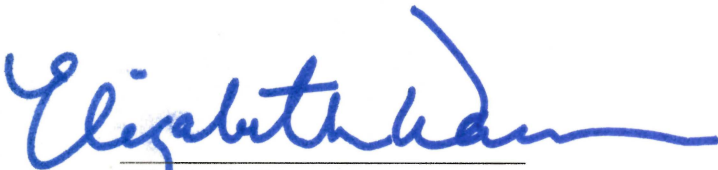
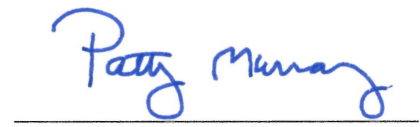
equitable support and encouragement for participation by women where separate programs for male and female athletes are conducted on a national basis.”⁶

We are disturbed by reports from the U.S. Women’s National Hockey Team suggesting that USA Hockey is not providing “equitable support” to female athletes. While USA Hockey provides its male athletes with a “seemingly endless” supply of hockey equipment, for example, female players are often expected to “buy their own.”⁷ This “inequitable support for equipment, staff, meals, travel expenses, transportation, and publicity” is apparent at younger levels of the sport as well: while USA Hockey spends \$3.5 million to support male youth athletes in its National Team Development Program, there is no parallel development program for women.⁸

The U.S. Women’s National Hockey Team has medaled in every Olympics since 1998, when Women’s Hockey was first added as an Olympic Sport.⁹ The team has won gold medals at the IIHF World Championships for the past three years in a row. As Meghan Duggan, team captain, announced last week, the women’s team has “represented our country with dignity and deserves to be treated with fairness and respect.”¹⁰

We urge you to resolve this dispute quickly to ensure that the USA Women’s National Hockey Team receives equitable resources. These elite athletes indeed deserve fairness and respect, and we hope you will be a leader on this issue as women continue to push for equality in athletics.

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator
Patty Murray
United States Senator

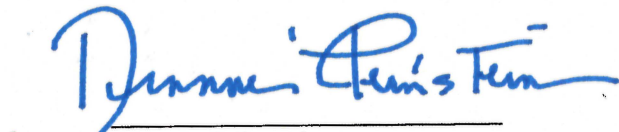
⁶ See 36 U.S.C. § 220524 (online at <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/36/220524>).


⁷ Will Hobson, “Why the United States’ best women’s hockey players are threatening to strike,” *Washington Post* (March 17, 2017) (online at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/sports/wp/2017/03/17/why-the-united-states-best-womens-hockey-players-are-threatening-to-strike/?utm_term=.1b3c2223099b).


⁸ Will Hobson, “Why the United States’ best women’s hockey players are threatening to strike,” *Washington Post* (March 17, 2017) (online at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/sports/wp/2017/03/17/why-the-united-states-best-womens-hockey-players-are-threatening-to-strike/?utm_term=.1b3c2223099b); Ballard Spahr, LLP, “U.S. Women’s National Hockey Players to Sit Out IIHF World Championships as Negotiations for Equitable Support Falter” (March 15, 2017) (online at <http://www.ballardspahr.com/eventsnews/pressreleases/2017-03-17-us-womens-national-hockey-players-to-sit-out-iihf-world-championships.aspx>).

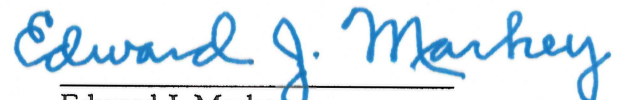
⁹ USA Hockey, “Update on Women’s National Team Issues” (March 17, 2017) (online at http://www.usahockey.com/news_article/show/771106?referrer_id=752796).

¹⁰ Seth Berkman, “U.S. Women’s Hockey Team Plans to Boycott World Championship Over Pay Dispute,” *New York Times* (March 15, 2017) (online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/15/sports/hockey/team-usa-women-boycott-world-championships.html>).


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

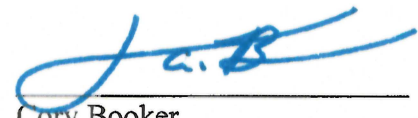

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Robert Menendez
United States Senator

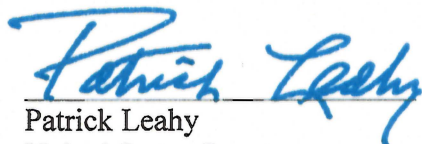

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

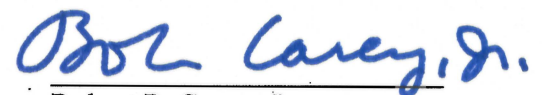

Thomas Carper
United States Senator


Cory Booker
United States Senator



Mazie Hirono
United States Senator

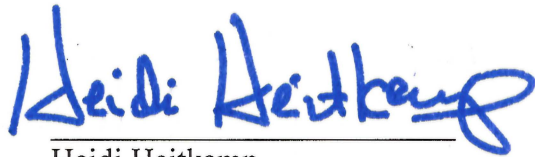

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator


Patrick Leahy
United States Senator

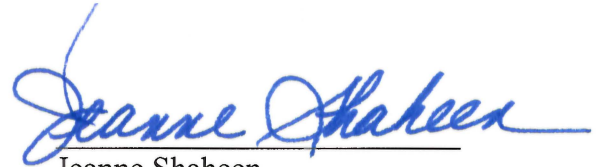

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

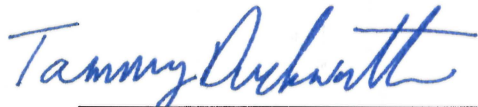

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator