



Game Over Commission Hearing 2020 - Day 2

[00:00:00] Good morning and welcome back to, uh, we're on day two, uh, the game over commissions in 2020, which of course are virtual. Um, but, um, they're still being attended by some of the leading experts in the United States. The game over commission is the only independent body that is actually analyzing what really happened with USA gymnastics and the sex abuse there.

And also, how do we make things better in sport for children and for young adults? Uh, we, you can find a link for the program on our homepage@childusa.org. I, and, uh, we have a really Sterling line out, uh, today. Uh, in addition to the information about our amazing commissioners, you can also find the bios of our speakers.

Uh, the first panel today is about the oversight of coaches. Uh, and as I know that many of you have already heard, uh, not only do we have a problem with child sex abuse across sport, but we have a really serious problem with physical, emotional, and verbal abuse. Uh, and it is at this point, a matter of what are the coaches doing and how do we make things better?

So we are delighted today to have three women who are at the forefront of changing the culture. Uh, we have, uh, Lisa, uh, Garay, who is, she's been involved in the sport of gymnastics for 40 years. Um, and she was a competitive gymnast. She's coached and taught, uh, competitive gymnastics. And she views her role as learning from the mistakes from the past.

And I think you will be very interested in moved by what she has to offer today. Uh, we are also delighted to welcome Gail Santa Maria. She is a counselor, um, and a sole practitioner and founder of hope road counseling and consulting. Um, but she's also been a passionate advocate, uh, for child protection and particularly in sport.

Uh, and she has some remarkable insights and experiences that, um, we all need to hear about to understand just what needs to be fixed. Uh, and then, uh, we have Anne Colossae, who's a wife, mother business owner, coach, and leader in this field. She's been coaching gymnast for 30 consecutive years. Um, and she even took the first behavior in gymnast, um, to the world championships.

So, uh, what I hope we'll get out of this particular session is it's not just the athletes and it's not just the U S OSI and the organizations the coaches are on the ground. Uh, so let's hear from these three leaders in trying to make it better for the athletes. And then we will, uh, have a question and answer with the commission.

Thanks so much. Hi, my name is Lisa Gary, and I own bay Ariel's gymnastics and Fremont, California. I've owned the gym for 16 years. Um, my story's a little different because I'm a little bit of the background to it is I was working at a gym that came up for sale and it came up for sale because the owner and the head coach, um, was going to go to jail for, um, abusing little gymnast, um, sexually.

And, um, it was a huge shock to all of us who was on, who were on the staff at the gym. Um, none of us believed it when we look back, of course there were many, many warning, you know, red flags and, you know, warnings about it. But just like when this whole thing came out with Larry Nassar and, um, athlete a and you see it and you don't believe it.



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And it's exactly what happened to me. So, um, I had the opportunity to buy this gym, which, I mean, I don't know if any of you could imagine buying a gym that had this horrible thing happened to it. Um, but my husband and I decided we were going to turn it around. So we were gonna paint the gym, bright colors.

We're going to bring in a new staff and we're going to do everything that I had wanted to do all the years that I was coaching. I made little less. I decided that every gym I worked at, oh, if I ever owned a gym, I'm going to do this differently. Oh, I don't like the way this went on. So, um, when I was ready to open this gym, I was really ready.

Um, so, uh, the best thing I can do, um, to talk about today is, um, over the years, I've made some really, really big mistakes and they were obvious, but I think what I can do today is to share some of the mistakes that I made that were not obvious. And, um, afterwards, you know, caused me to do a lot of thinking and to figure out what I did wrong.

Um, so the, of course, like I said, in, in our gym, you walk in the doors, you know what our philosophy is. Um, it is printed everywhere. It's in our mission on our website, Um, I talk about it constantly. It's in every staff meeting, it's in every note I send out to my staff, um, and to my parents. So of course, the second week of owning the.

Um, I didn't know. I didn't really know one of the coaches very well, and she was on the floor and she's coaching all these little kids and they're like five and six years old. And so now I'm in a whole new role. I'm a manager and an owner, and I'm standing on the other side of the gym. And all I can do is it's not even that.

I see it. I just hear in the back in my ear, this one coach on one girl on one girl just nagging her nagging and almost bullying at that point. But I'm not thinking about it as being bullying. Um, next day I listened again, hear the same thing on a different child. So, um, had a conversation with her and I just told her that it wasn't okay.

And I tried to offer some suggestions on, you know, instead of getting frustrated, all the normal steps to take, um, and she wasn't having it, you know, she was just like, look, you know, you can't tell me what to do and I know how to get her to be good. And you know, it wasn't even like a high level gymnastics team.

Um, so I let her go and it was hard cause it was the second week I owned my gymnastic school. Um, thank God for my husband standing behind me pushing me. Um, the next day I got approached by our huge booster club that I didn't realize how big this booster club was. Um, the president to mandate a meeting, sat in my office and told me that I couldn't fire her.

Um, she coached, you know, at this gym previously for so many years and so many little girls loved her and I just looked at him and I made it clear that he understood, I will not tolerate somebody being mean to a child. And he's like, well, that's not being mean. And he's giving me all these explanations and I'm like, that's being mean, and there is no gray area.

And, um, so after that I decided that I had to take a little bit of a different approach. So we started to talk about children's souls and that's, you know, the number one thing that we cared about at the gym. Um, so that wasn't like anything like the, you would think was, um, a big mistake. I think that was a great thing.



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And it started. On a roll, but the mistake was that I took for granted that just talking about it and just, you know, existing was going to make everything perfect because it wasn't. I had a coach, um, come to me and she was an ex gymnast. So this was a few years down the line. Um, I had coached her for a few years.

She was a great Seamus sweet girl comes from a great family. Like there's nothing, you know, bad about this in any way. And, um, she was very, very good friends with some of the girls who were previously abused from the gym, but I didn't think about it. And, um, she wants me to coach. She wants to make it her full-time job.

This was going to be her life. And I was so excited because she was so talented. She was so lovely. And I just wanted to, you know, really help her. And, um, I gave her a job. I gave her a position and, um, she knew my philosophies. She knew everything. I thought since she grew up in our gym. Um, and she knew exactly where I was coming from, that she would be a positive coach and slowly the warning signs started coming out.

Um, the kids started to look beautiful. She did an amazing job with them. Um, but then I started to get some complaints from some parents and there were little, um, I found that in the end, the parents were really afraid to tell me because there would be backlash on the kids and what made me so sad was what she was telling them was, oh my goodness.

If you fall off that beam, Lisa is going to be so upset with you and the Jim B Ariel's is going to look so bad. Um, you know, she puts so much pressure on them, even in the gym and a competition that I didn't, I had no idea she was doing. She was using me and I like really wanted to help her. I, you know, had lots of meetings with her, so many training, so many crying sessions, oh, Lisa, you know, I want to do so well.

And you know, and I just couldn't believe that she was actually using me against the kids. Um, so I let her go. And that was really, really hard because she was so close to her. And, um, I didn't have a coach anymore, and that entire team just picked up and left and went to another gym. And I thought that, you know, by being honest with the parents and, and telling them everything along the way, they basically didn't trust me because of my mission and my philosophy and my culture.

And here, I had this young, beautiful coach who I thought was going to be a role model for these, um, young girls, um, coaching them. And so that was a big, major, major fail on my part. Um, but it wasn't obvious. It was just something that, you know, I did start to see, but I really felt like I wanted to help her.

And it just went on for too long and it just was not good. Um, I have another coach that I hired, who I recruited for maybe three, four years, and it was a male coach and, um, so positive, so inspirational, just like I thought he could coach like anybody, which he could, he could coach a group of kids from a beginner all the way up to a college level in one group with, you know, in one hour.

So I was very, very impressed with him and, um, I really wanted him. We became friends, we talked for hours on philosophies, on cultures, on gymnast, on other things. And, um, I had the utmost trust in him. Um, and then one day it was just really crazy. Uh, he was doing a private lesson in the gym. Um, the parents of the private lesson was there, but we had a very, very strict rule in our gym.

This was before Larry Nassar, before everything came out. Um, I had these rules from what happened previously in the gym when I first bought it. Um, he was giving a private lesson. I saw on our cameras



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and, um, I called him and he said, oh, well, the office manager is on their way. They'll be here in a second.

And I said, you're in the. Without another adult from the, from our staff. And he was like, well, the mom's here. And I'm like, that's, that's not our rules. And he said, okay. So, um, basically when I got to the gym, I fired him immediately. And my entire staff, every parent, every friend I had, nobody could believe I did this.

They were like, Lisa, you know, everyone deserves a second chance. He didn't hurt anyone. He didn't harm anyone. And this is something I just tell so many people. And I think people start are starting to understand that now, but this was a few years ago. This was like six years ago. Um, he was my most trusted employee and he knew how I felt about everything, dealing with safe sport, dealing with children, dealing with, you know, the rules in my gym.

And he didn't, he didn't follow it. And something like that to me does not get a second chance. It is the safety of the, the wellbeing and the safety of the children, of adult, of staff, of himself even. And, um, he took it for granted. And in these times and days you cannot take that for granted. And boom, six months later, the whole Larry Nassar story came out and I was right and he didn't hurt anyone and he's never hurt anyone, but the point was about trust and you have to be able to trust people 100%.

So that was a little lesson I learned. That was not something that was obvious. Um, he didn't do anything horrible, but he did. And I had to stand behind that and I've always stood behind that a hundred percent. Um, I had a coach call me up and he said that one of my coaches were, um, in, uh, the gymnastics meet and they were in the back room and they were bad mouthing.

Um, one of the judges now this judge is married to the guy who went to jail. Who I bought the gym from. And, um, I said, okay. And he said, she's in that back room. And she's saying, you know, that she can't believe that she's, you know, judging all these children and she's still married to him and, um, on and on and on.

And I was like, what do I do? And like, I quickly thought, and I said, you know what? I said, I'm going to explain something to you. She was on the team before I bought this gym. And those girls were molested by this, by this guy. She doesn't need to stay quiet about it. And he was like, but she said a big competition.

And these, all these people and all these judges and all that. And I was like, are you listening to yourself? This is the problem. After all these years, nobody wants to talk about things. Everyone wants to keep it quiet. And I said, her best friends were abused. Why should she keep quiet? And this judge is in this competition and she's going to judge my coaches, kids, what she's allowed to do that.

So he took another whole turn and he was like, oh my God, Lisa, I've never really thought about that. You know, that's, that's amazing. Um, and just recently that same person came to me and said, you know, Lisa, over all these years, you've always had, you've always said, you know, out loud to everyone that you want positive coaching and you were, you were so into the, changing the culture and doing all that.

Um, can you help me with my staff? I just, I just had a meeting with them and there was so much negativity and everyone was thinking, oh, well you just want us all to be NACY NACY now because, um, you don't want to lose money and you didn't want lose kids to another gym. And my brain just started like going nuts.



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I was like, oh my God. You know, like changing the culture. And it made me think. For years and years when people were unhappy at my club or a parent had a problem, I would tell them, you know, every gym, every gymnastic school has their own philosophy, their own culture. And, um, you know, you have to learn about each one and then you have to pick the one you're comfortable with.

And that's where you give your trust to the coach. Um, but why should every gym have a different culture or philosophy? I teach gymnastics. I opened the gymnastic school. Okay. Because I love children and I want them to love gymnastics or fitness, or I want them to have a passion and I care about their souls and why should the philosophy be different anywhere?

And I think this is the point we have to get across. Yes, we have to change the culture, but the culture needs to be the same everywhere. The philosophy needs to be the same everywhere. No one should ever, ever be mean to a child. There is no gray area about it. Whether it's as a coach being too strict or too much discipline, no, you know, when somebody is being mean and it shouldn't happen.

And the biggest thing I could say is stand firm. Don't keep an employee who, who you don't feel is being a hundred percent. Don't try to teach them. You can't. If they know your philosophy, they know the rules that you have to cut it off. Um, you have to continually educate your staff. You have to, you know, find new ways to do something and show them, find a different way.

They might roll their eyes. They might not be on board. You have to take a breath and you have to not have them on your staff. You have to not be trusting them in your gym to take care of your children. You know, I feel like I'm a gym owner. I'm in the gym all the time. It is the gym owner's responsibility.

If you are a head coach, you have to place this responsibility on the head coach. If you are a gym manager, you have to place the responsibility on the gym, um, on the person that's managing you. And on the gym owner, you always have to go back to that gym owner. They had a reason for opening their gym.

They have a reason for staying open and you have to make sure that. You're all on the same level. I love gymnastics. I love kids, all the classes and their day in my gym. And they do a salute and they say, I love gymnastics and I'm going to do it forever. And I'm just going to keep trying to help wherever I can.

And I hope that my stories have helped you in some way. I am honored to be asked to speak and to give some testimony. And, um, thank you. My name is Gail Santa Maria. I am coming to you from Southern New Jersey. I am a former gymnast mom of a gymnast and a child and family therapist. I specialize in trauma.

So back in 2013, I reentered the gymnastics worlds. Uh, once again, I wasn't prepared for that. My daughter was a runner jumper, climber. She just loved to do everything related to flips. And, um, we just knew gymnastics would be such a great foundation for her. No matter what she chose, what I was not prepared for was to walk into the gym and be overwhelmed by my own emotions related to the sport.

I was overwhelmed by anxiety. Um, even excitement. I mean, I felt like I missed the sport, had grief. Um, you see, I love this sport. When I was a senior in high school, I wanted nothing to do with it anymore. And when I say that I was burnt, I would not even tune into the Olympics. I wanted nothing to do with watching the sport.



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I would walk out of rooms if it was on. And what I thought was a dislike of the sport. It was really a reaction to the culture that I experienced in the sport. So gymnastics is hard work there's long hours, competition, stress, nerves, conquering fears, um, learning new skills. All of that. I loved, I don't regret one ounce of that.

When I look back, I realized at the toxic culture of gymnastics is what I walked away from. So I began gymnastics kind of late for this at the age of nine. And I moved up to team pretty fast, uh, before you know it, I was, you know, starting competitions and by the time of age of 16, um, the organization was USGF at the time I, um, was a level eight and, um, you know, one of my last meets my coach deciding I was 16.

I was a little. Uh, he decided it was time to start weighing maybe four meats. Um, I don't remember all the names. I don't have a vivid memories of the names and kind of the things I went through related to him. I don't forget his facial reactions and his body language. I do remember him screaming a lot and saying things like, are you stupid or just death?

So this experience along with other trauma that I experienced in childhood led me down a path of suppressing my voice and my experiences. Um, I had, I had early trauma in my life and I was a child who had internalized my suffering. I have destructive self narratives, and I had just such a heartbreaking sense of self.

These struggles have followed me into adulthood and it took me a while to really learn and realize how my traumas have impacted me and how to not beat myself up anymore. And to be honest, it's, I'm a work in progress. Um, and I also have been able to view these experiences through a trauma lens, not the it's just me.

I'm the defective one lens. Ultimately I do believe that this is the why I chose the field that I chose. I know that when children are impacted by trauma, that they have a false narrative able to leave system, um, that they're the defective ones. Um, they also feel kind of suffering in their voice, not feeling empowered in their voice or in their ability to help themselves.

So the work that I do has really become a specialized focus on working with kids, impacted by trauma to seek their understanding and their narratives, empowering their voice and ultimately pursuing healing from their traumas. So the question I'm addressing today really are what were the oversights, um, that were in place, what was missed and maybe what oversights, what are things that can be done, um, to make this a safer sport?

Well, I've had the benefit and the privilege of speaking with, um, some of USA personnel about this, and there are certainly awareness to the past misses. So I'm going to speak about the trial. Right from the past. And, um, and how I will use that to address what was miss and what can be done better. Um, so I approach this through my experiences as a former gymnast, a current mom of a gymnast, and also as a trauma specialist, working with kids and families in the past, there was a divided paradigm.

There was no transparency, no communication. There was, um, failures really between all stakeholders except the children. There's no supportive coaches, uh, no child development education, no accountability, no family component to education, um, to kids or parents, no reporting system was in place at the time.

Um, no system that responded immediately to child endangerment. And I want to say it probably wasn't felt that it was necessary. Most importantly, it was not child centered. Um, the child's goals,





their experiences, their voice. They were rarely a dollar budged. I would say that kids were often pawns to someone else's success.

So the athletes did not feel that they mattered. Therefore, internally they suffered suppressing these experiences that are painful and their voice, even when they spoke up, it was not often validated or then blamed [00:30:00] shamed, punished even for not producing results. One often athletes will produce skill out of avoidance, right?

And then they move on to avoid the coach's reaction. So in order to kind of get away from those coaches, disapproval, that feels too hard and too painful, or their parents disapproval that's when they would produce it never came from a place of safety and empowerment. They came doing the skills from a fight or flight state.

They did not feel safe. I've been reading testimony after testimony of athletes under the gymnast Alliance, hashtag of their experiences of abuse over years, decades, even. And the thing that really has broken my heart is hearing. Talk about their experiences going up to practice, just driving in and being crying and being sick, even wishing that they would be harmed.

So they didn't have to go to phrases. One. I just saw today actually, where she said she was living in a territory where there was bombing violence. And she said, she wished she was bombed. And another was wishing that they were in a car accident and hit. And some kids had even gone to say, some athletes had even gone to say that they wished they were dead.

That breaks my heart. And this is under the hashtag the gymnast Alliance. So I've been listening to those voices and committing to doing better to change it because their voices are essential in this change. Um, for me all these experiences, all the voices, I'm listening to my knowledge in this field of trauma and my experiences that working with children who are suffering, um, daily, I believe there are certain items that are necessary to implement, to really make us a safer organization that better protects children.

Number one is the child's voice. Children needs to be heard. The athletes need to be heard. There's multiple ways to pursue this, but right now I feel one thing that can be implemented is seeking out better education and training for parents and coaches to help them tune into the clues of stress. Um, and also how does to kind of tune into like body language, how does seek out the voice of the child?

I even envisioned a survey that the kids, the athletes can complete maybe every year, maybe at the end of a season, and they can share many things, including how they felt the season went, what went well, what didn't go well. Um, but it would also touch on their experiences in the gym and, um, you know, maybe their experiences with each coach.

I also believe this is ultimately best practice would be a sandwich between child development training for coaches, along with other. I also believe the coaches need support. Good coaches will rise up and be part of the solution. And I believe that part of that is highlighting the coach's success and the framework of good coaching practices, not just elite athletic success coaches who are coming out of unhealthy culture.

Like I came out of can relearn healthier, more effective tactics. I believe there are more good coaches out there than bad ones. The harmful abusive coaches will weed themselves out. And, uh, we'll hopefully be suspended at a faster rates. Um, they need to be removed immediately if they are in danger to children, that can be demonstrated through multiple ways, but moral and confidence.



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Um, similar traits to narcissism could be as something to look into further. Um, but we can't allow coaches to be around kids any longer, who are harming them, not in due process of investigation, they just need to be removed. Um, parents would also need to be included in this process, right? They're the front line for their children.

And I don't think they often know what it means to look for a stressed out child and how to pursue their child's voice. So training for parents would be essential data collection, surveys, questionnaires. I even, you know, I got a call from a company that I've used where they just said, we're checking in.

Are you satisfied? What can we do better on just even random phone calls like that, just to check in, um, would be excellent customer service, but gives parents and children a voice. Good relationships require trust. Communication is essential to build trust and this can be improved across all parties, through conversations with coaches, gyms, even panel discussions, maybe from time to time by region by state.

Uh, however that can get started or continue, I should say so through my recent conversations with USA G I do believe that the right personnel are in there who are child center and want to prioritize athlete wellbeing. Culture change is going to be messy. It's going to take time, but I believe it's coming.

And I do believe more athletes are going to benefit from the sport and not have to be impacted by the trauma and harm from the past. So thank you for allowing me to speak on this. I am committed to be part of the change and the solution. My name is Anne Colossae. I'm the co-owner of Jim land, school of gymnastics.

I'm also the head coach of the girls USA G team for a rated gymnastics in Hamilton, New Jersey. I've been involved in the sport of gymnastics for 34 years, and I've been coaching for 30 consecutive years. I've worked with all levels from preschool to international elite. I've worked in many different private clubs prior to the formation of Jim land, which I am the co-owner with my husband.

I, the time I spent coaching at each club has formed my style and opinions on what is right and wrong in our sport. I also hold a master's degree in clinical psychology, which I use every day. I believe this sexual, physical and emotional abuse occurring in our sport is a systematic problem and requires a total overhaul of gymnastics culture change has to happen, and it will only properly succeed.

If all parts of a circle are covered, this circle encompasses USA G as our governing body club owners, coaches, parents, and of course, athletes, I am angered with USAID and how they have handled this critical time. And our process to change. USAID has been the driving force of this disordered culture.

Larry Nasser was the final blow that woke up the world to this system of abuse. However, Larry, the monster could not have reached the level of abuse that he did without the USAID culture of obedience, silence and fear, a national governing body NGB that has winning and endorsements as its number one goal and holds its members as necessary puppets rather than equal partners.

I believe that this concept is widely understood and accepted by many in our industry. My goal in this testimony is to speak on the why and the how of such systematic failures. As I see it as well as offer insight into how we reinvent ourselves is a more than just safe place, but an industry built on a child first mentality.



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I believe the best way to promote change is to encourage insight and self-reflection this needs to happen for each of us as gymnastics professionals. In addition to our governing body and our athletes. As a deeper understanding is formed. Then we can move to the place of action, education and training after decades of disordered culture.

This is not a simple solution. It is a process to change gymnastics for me, it's in my veins. It's my passion. It's the first thing I found to love outside of my family. When I was a child, this was my number one. I started coaching because my coach asked me to it. Didn't take long for me to realize how much I loved to teach.

In my earlier years of coaching, I studied elite gymnastics. I wanted to be an Olympic coach. I wanted to be the best. I wanted to be exposed to the best coaches to achieve this dream. I was a student of coaching and I wanted to learn all I could. I put myself around the best coaches. I watched the training videos.

I was soaking in whatever I could find. There are times I felt conflicted between my relationship as a grownup to a child and how coaching them at the very top of their ability or their quote unquote spoken goal could lead me to say things I felt were wrong. The expectations put on coaches from national staff club owners, bosses, parents, athletes, as well as the expectations we put upon ourselves, they can be impossible to reach the super driven and competitive nature of many coaches can lead to losing sight of what is most important.

The child, as a young coach, I was inspired by so many great coaches. My drive for coaching though, it was always kid-centered, which doesn't mean I never made any mistakes. I do that every day. My passion is even between influence the lives of children and developing excellent gymnast. I have always adored children.

I've been fascinated by the way they navigate their world. I never wanted to teach those perfect robot gymnast, the bobble heads that would do anything you asked and try everything without any reservation is I put myself in a position to develop. As a coach, I became exposed to the highest competitor levels, competitive levels of the USA.

I wanted to coach maybe even an Olympian, however, elite gymnastics and child joy seemed harder and harder to maintain. It just didn't fit under the same umbrella. Elite gymnastics type coaching felt ugly to me, leading me to walk away from the USA G elite world before my feet ever got securely grounded.

In many ways, I was impressed today. I see this system as is functional yet I remain impressed by all that is golden and good about USA G I was very motivated to learn. All I could in my textbook knowledge is a compiled by the best in our industry, the knowledge we have amongst our USG national staff is second to no other system or country.

However, the focus and education at the top of our sport for many decades has been sports success driven with minimum training in child. Imagine in my younger years, if I had been exposed to child development, child psychology, I had this exposure, but it was through my college education. It was not through USG.

Our national staff encouraged us to develop robot children. The mindset has not been, how do we assist the child in being their best version, but rather what does the best of the best look like? And how many kids do we need to sift through to reach that perfect champion? Our elite system has been a survival of the fittest format.



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A gymnast could be the standard one day and totally disposable. The next I witnessed this culture from the back burner and also in the developmental stages through the tops Hope's development camps and national league programs. Somehow the importance of the child was often lost. The athletes were taught to be putty in the hands of the adults, responsible for making them champions.

The athletes were taught either directly or indirectly that any resistance or rebellion to the plan would lead to removal or demotion. Many coaches were taught this same. Numerous times in my coaching career, I have felt that I needed to coach outside my comfort zone in order to be recognized as good from peers, persons of authority, bosses, et cetera.

This culture opened the doors for not only Larry Nassar, but many other child abusers in the aftermath of so much scandal. I am surprised to see so many gymnast's parents and coaches finding their voice to speak up and demand real culture change.

What has been disheartening is the witch hunt on our coaches. As USA G has tried to preserve itself. It has been unwilling to own its part in the systematic problems. USA G through safe sport has thrown so many coaches out of its club membership without even acknowledging USA. G's part in the development of said, coaches, please understand.

I am not saying that many of the current band coaches do not deserve their suspension. What I am saying is that USA G needs to own their part. USA G needs to apologize for their part in the training and development of so many elite coaches to follow a dysfunctional and abusive culture. USA G needs delete us out of this damage culture.

They have governed during its creation. They need to lead us and they need to lead us to a new governing body can still be G, but it needs to be a new version. How does USAID do that? They need to greatly increase the amount of child training its professional members receive not as another opportunity for USAID to profit, but as an effort to truly encourage change as coaches, our understanding of the child development should be similar to our understanding of teaching the perfect Cartwheel.

This is where I feel USG has failed its members. The most metals and endorsements have been far more important than supporting the members. The members are the athletes, the code. And the club owners, but USA G has a history of bowing down to the companies with the endorsements technical and child development should be certified at each level of coaching.

Coaches should move through the levels based on those certifications, just like the gymnast, this training should be ongoing. It should be required and it should be free. Instead of the very basic safety certification coaches should receive a collection of child training and certification coaches trained and developed through dysfunction, both as a gymnast and a coach need to work, to change the culture.

And at some point, if they don't, there'll be obsolete change as part of the job just as a coach needs to adapt. So does a gymnast. They need to make their corrections. They need to fix their form. Another useful question is do we, in the most communal sense of the world, inclusive of USAID provide coaches as support, education and encouragement to adapt and improve.

And I think the answer to that is no, without a standardized approach to coach education that is inclusive of youth development, large scale systematic change, leading to consistent high quality experiences for athletes is impossible. Gymnastics needs to operate more like the rest of the business world with professional development, performance reviews, clear career paths, adequate vacation and





on and on coaching is demanding no matter the sport, but in gymnastics, I feel that there's much work to be done.

Coaches need to be incredibly patient with the athletes yet they are very overworked, underpaid, stressed, because they don't have proper resources. Not sure how we fix all of that, but that is definitely something we need to look into. I don't think there's an excuse to the extremes that some have gone to produce results, but I do think a lot of things will have to change to keep talented.

Well-meaning capable coaches in the sport coaching the right way, requires an incredible amount of patience and a very intentional effort. And at all times to handle things properly, it's going to take a lot of education and effort to change, but yes, we can do it. Furthermore, our culture of parent needs to be studied and encouraged to change parents, to need opportunities, to educate themselves on the best way to not only recognize abuse, but to support their athletes and coaches.

There are many wonderful parents of gymnast just as there are many wonderful coaches. There are also many coaches that have the best intentions for the athletes, but are still causing abuse. There are many parents guilty of the same thing. There are parents pushing their kids too far, too fast. There are parents putting unimaginable pressure on coaches to push their child to a certain status.

We need ways to handle these situations as well. Parent education is necessary. Coaches need advocacy and support coaches, parents, and athletes need to feel like they are on the same team. Each part of the whole needs to know their lane and how best to navigate and advocate for what is best for the child.

First, there is a lot to fix in our world. Always the fact that we were having these commissions and these tough conversations gives me great hope as a club owner, coach, mother, and gymnastics, passion centered person. I expect change. I expect all parts of our system to do better. I expect better for myself and I will continue to introspect and understand the norms ingrained in me.

I will ask the why, why do I teach this way? How can I adapt my plans for this individual child? I know if we expect more from ourselves at each level, that our hope for a better future is in our hands. And if it's in our hands, then it's definitely possible. Thank you so much.

Thank you so much for those, um, really illuminating comments. What, what I'd like to do, uh, is to, uh, ask, uh, I'd like to start with Gail. Um, and just I, as a therapist, I'd like to ask her, she she's pretty, uh, positive on USA. G can we really save USA?

From you. Thank you for allowing me to speak that. Um, so I really, at this point say USA G is likely going to be here to stay. I don't see movement, um, that is going to say otherwise. And, um, I'm kind of, I approached this from the bridge model that in the lavish trauma therapy I do with kids and parents, you kind of say, how can we be the bridge, right?

How can we repair something that sometimes I even say a family therapy is, is it even worth it? You know? Um, so I want to be the bridge and say, okay, there is problems. Let's pursue how we can take something that has been so toxic and has been under that toxic umbrella and say, how do we go right in and, and present.

He hears all the steps that need to be taken to resolve. We need to, based on conversations, I've had, you know, I've been privy to, um, that there are some good personnel in there that are child centered and they're new, you know, that the staff has been in there for, you know, really just in the last year.



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Um, and I think there are going to be strides that are taken and the trauma model, what I would like to see, I like Ann was saying, I like to see an apology. I would like to see transparency. I would like to see panel discussions. I would like to see conversations happening saying, yeah, this was wrong. I don't feel you can move farther.

Um, I don't think you can move out of toxicity until there's trust established and that's not there right now. So, um, so, so let me ask, um, Lisa, uh, do you have, uh, the same, uh, you know, what this commission is trying to do is to figure out through the lens of some of the leading experts in the country, what to do, uh, about the fact that there is serious sexual abuse and your, your testimony was riveting to me because you're just, you know, you are the classic coach who just wants to do the right thing.

Um, and the system is hard to be in. So what is your view on USA? I personally don't know what's going on there right now. So I just feel that we need a new organization, you know, and just start over. Where do you stand on that

with in regard? You're still talking to me. Sorry. I was asking Ayaan oh, sorry. I was unmuting. So I feel like I've been privy to know a lot of the change that's happening, um, at the top and at the leadership of USA gymnastics. So I'm not sure that starting a whole new, um, organization is the right move.

Although even three months ago, that's exactly what I thought needed to happen. Um, it does seem like it's possible to, to rebuild and reinvent and keep some of the, you know, the great stuff that's, that's always been there. Um, it, it worries me to start from scratch, but I do think every, every portion of it needs to be studied and looked at, and it has to start with an apology and some ownership.

So James Marsh has a question.

Thank you very much. The three of you for presenting today, it's been really instructive to hear, especially from you, Lisa, uh, on your struggles to really change the culture and all of the challenges you face there. Um, obviously one person in a, in a world where there are hundreds, if not thousands of gyms, uh, is, is really very instructive my question.

And we had a very fascinating history, um, yesterday of the Olympic movement and how it changed, became more commercialized and, and more, um, money centered, you know, starting around 20 years ago. I was wondering, given all of the panelists, your, your experience over many, many years, how do you think we got to this point in gymnastics and sport in general?

Um, you know, is it a chicken egg problem, which came first, the bad coaches or which came first the culture, or were they self-reinforcing, was this something that the Russians imported with their, you know, Soviet style training that, that took over, uh, the gymnastics world, you know, 30 or 40 years ago? Um, can you give us any historical perspective at all on, on what may have been driving this culture?

Um, obviously we know that that money drives a lot of things in this culture, money drives sports and, and, and clearly, uh, we think that's a part of it from our discussion yesterday, but what do you see, um, on the more, you know, frontlines, grassroots level of what has taken over the sport and got it to the point where it is today?



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Um, I feel when I coached winning was so amazing and, you know, we, I think the other people who spoke also, you know, they talked about how, um, they just followed another coach. They just learned from another coach and everyone was winning. And so you just modeled after someone else and you, you saw it working and it, you know, but somewhere early on, I completely shut down and I was like, I do not think this is good.

Um, but I spent a lot of years working for different gyms that I wanted to be at the best gym in the county and the best gym in the state. And I moved across the country to find other gyms. And, um, I think that's basically, it that's the winning Gail. When I listened yesterday, I listened to Jennifer say, and actually when I read her book in the eighties, she was the one who like, I opened my eyes even more.

And I would be standing in a gym and I would be looking and listening to the coaches and then listening to myself speak. And I was like, what is going on? Okay. Well, do you have any alternative models? I mean, I guess that's my bigger question. I mean, there is this, you know, very Soviet style, you worked and you work and you work and the gymnast or the fodder, and there's 10 more in line and you push them and you push them and you'd be raped them and you break them down, you build them up and you know, that is a model of coaching.

Right. You know, that, that, that is definitely a model of coaching. And when you have an unlimited, you know, it's like world war one, you know, when you can send 50 million men into battle, losing 10 million is, is no big deal, cause you're going to win the war. And so those individual soldiers, you know, are not the issue, but you know, uh, there's another model called the UN where we sit down and we, you know, resolve things about war.

I mean, is there another model in coaching, again, you know, a, uh, if you will, a winning model and coaching that, that doesn't need to resort to this, you know, mass casualty that we see, not only in USA gymnastics, but in so many of the other sports that we've been talking about. Well, I want to say that this would be helpful information to explore because, um, I don't know.

I can't, I mean, I'll let the other ladies also answer this, but I'm not aware of, and I'm certainly trying to look into what that would be. Um, because Accra Lobely championship and winning really has been such a coming down from the Olympics, right? The Olympic committee is the platform you would, you pursue.

Right. So the gymnastics, so my, my seven year old, when we switched gyms, one thing she said to me, it's like, they loved gymnastics more than kids at seven. So that mentality is that winning in the championship and in gymnastics success. And I want to say, if everybody's trying to achieve that, kind of look at the servant leadership model, like what's up head, like who's running that who's driving that there's somebody up there, you know, um, Well, what is the role of U S a G in how the gyms are run?

I mean, that's the other question you said, you know, it's at the top, you know, obviously, you know, sports, politics, you know, we have winners, we have losers, you know, that, that is the model and, and sports, you know, obviously we all want to be winners. We all, we all want to get the gold. I mean, you're always going to have that pressure, but, you know, I guess my question, and I think you answered it, you know, fairly well is, you know, it's a point a to point B you know, kind of model like, right.

You can get there, you know, do you have to break people down, literally destroy their bodies and its mind and spirits to turn them into robots that when, and I, I guess I agree that is something that the



panel is, is worth pursuing, and we've got some much more qualified people than me on this panel to speak about it from the psychological social work and medical approach.

And that's it interrupt, I want to say from the neuroscience perspective, you know, the neuroscience has been gymnastics is far behind with the neurosciences, right? So neurosciences is already out there brain research saying you can have greater success and healthier people with this more empowered model.

Right. So, but I think gymnastics [01:00:00] hasn't gotten there yet. Um, and I want to say the neuroscience maybe has been, you know, it's been in development for probably 20 years, but really some profound information in the last 10 years. Um, and it's just, it's not out there. It's been a fear-based model. It's been a, um, as, you know, everybody said, like you do what I say, this is where you get success.

It's fear, it's shame to get results. Um, and now the neuroscience that's out there is the opposite. Well, that also shifts the power from the athlete to the coach. I mean, and that's another, another problem that we're seeing here is that the coaches have so much power over the athletes. Um, that it's really, it is a top-down model.

You've got one coach, you've got many athletes and tend to take their place. So, you know, I think an important piece of this is also empowering the athletes, um, w which is really, I think what we're all seeing as part of this commission that ironically we know the athletes from seeing them on the television screen and we all lionize them and, and, and, and admire them for their skill and training.

But the reality is they're at the very lowest rung of the whole, you know, Olympic process and, you know, sports injuries. So, uh, I think that's, uh, that's something that we really want to look, you know, look at as a commission is how do we really empower athletes in a, in a competitive environment? Uh, there it's going to be competitive there.

I don't think there's any way to, you know, say that it's not a competitive environment and that, that is the very nature of sport. But I think that is, that is really one of the challenges that, that we have here in, in deciding how athletes, especially young child athletes get empowered in this very competitive environment.

So I really thank you guys for your contribution. So, uh, all really important points. I hope the whole commission was taking notes about everybody's homework cause w w we have a lot of work to do. Uh, so I, Sharon Cooper, Dr. Sharon Cooper has a question for Gail. Uh, thank you very much. And thank you for everything that you all have offered.

I was having some tech problems initially. Um, what Gail, what I wanted to ask you was, do you feel that, um, there are a couple of things that are happening. One, we are adults, fine children because we're holding them to adult standards as if their immature brains could process, you know, the demands that are made of them.

Number one, to, uh, are we commodifying children, which is a dynamic that we see in trafficking of children. And there are a lot of similarities, uh, from everything that you all have spoken about that you see in trafficking, labor trafficking in this particular situation. And then finally, because of the recurrent injuries and ongoing, uh, lifelong employment, uh, impact, are there some lessons that we should be learning from the chronic traumatic encephalopathy component that we see in football?

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You know, that should be causing systems to start putting the safety of the athletes first and foremost, as compared to winning first and foremost. That's my question. That is, I mean, I was very powerful and I want to see if I can kind of sum it up and see if, um, or Lisa have anything to add, but, um, You know, the, uh, the model that has existed, like I said, it was a fear, shame, blame, right?

Not taking the child's, uh, child centered humane approach. Um, so the child is expected to be silent, to produce. And as Anne said, then you're, you're disposable. So the fear around that from not only, you know, the, the, the coaches feel the fear, because they're only validated if they're coaching success, but then there's, there's the parents now who are a part of this process, unknowingly, I want to say many times.

And sometimes sadly they know. Um, and because of success of the kids, I, I said in my testimony, the kids are pawns for somebody else's success. So, and so what does that mean is the kids aren't looked at as humans, right? And so, yeah, there, there there's no humanity in that. And, um, the, so basically the model, what that has been in place for so long that systemically abusive, hasn't caught up to the model that says, wow, you can actually even do more.

If you treat the child as a human and you empower and you build trust. I mean, and then you have not only success as in gymnastics, but you have your, you're nurturing a whole person to be contributed as leaders in the field. Instead of all of us walking around with wounds that we're constantly trying to overcome.

So, Anne, did you want to add something to that? I do. Thank you. I think it's really important as we, as we study this, that we don't forget that there are some really great coaches out there and acknowledge that there's a whole culture that is creating this. It's not just about weeding out bad, bad coaches.

So I think there's there's problems in our American culture. Um, I mean, it's not just gymnastics. It's, it's, it's literally football and baseball and there's many sports where kids are pushed to perfection far too young and parents that are, you know, also pushing that to happen. I think we're gymnastics got to a heightened level and a total disordered level is that you have the American culture that wants to win and value sport, um, way up here.

And then on top of that, we weren't the best. So I remember when USA gymnastics was like fifth or sixth in the world. And in order for us as Americans to be the best we started bringing in a huge influx of foreign, um, coaches and, and, you know, as we brought in, so as Marta and Bella defected from Romania and produced Mary Lou Retton, um, and many others that's I think that's when the organization took a shift to follow more vet fear-based, um, robot type model.

Um, and I remember after they retired, you know, because first they were just individual coaches like myself and Lisa running their own club, but they were put on a pedestal because of the success they had. And then they retired and USA gymnastics went down again. Um, and I remember when there was like a world that we did really poorly and everybody was distraught over the way the kids didn't have discipline and so on and so forth.

And that's when they went and asked Bela and Marta to come back in into be the national team coordinators. And so they made this hybrid, um, communist model, where instead of the kids, all being trained in one place all the time, they required anybody on national staff to make those trips down to the ranch.



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And so then the coaches are now being trained through the Romanian system and the Russian and other others that were brought into influence. If you look at the national staff, most of them were not American. Um, although they could be citizens. And I'm not saying that European means that it's bad, it just, it just brought in another, another level.

Um, and so I feel like USA G developed this system that created these amazing Olympic champions and built the sport up. Um, but there wasn't a balance of understanding a child. And if I wanted to know something, technically if I didn't know how to teach a skill, I feel like I could find tons and tons of information to help me, but it's really hard to find information on how to deal with, um, challenging parents, um, different kinds of learning behaviors in children, just the physical development of a child, the teenage years.

There's, there's so much more that we should have access to that we don't. Um, and the, the last thing that I wanted to say, uh, Oh, this is my last thing I wanted to say. So when, when the monster came out and then the ranch got destroyed and Marta officially retired and we had a new coordinator and blah, blah, blah.

I remember asking some of my friends that are in the elite world, how was that first national camp? And there was no change. It was like a different head, the same system. And so I was really disappointed that as we said, as USAID said, we're now going to have a culture change, which we all were like finally, um, it didn't come from USA G to say, okay, that's coaches of our country.

This is what we've done wrong. This is what we're going to do different. This is the system we're going to develop. And now we're a few years removed and we're starting to get it. So I'm not saying it can't still happen through Osagie, but there's been, there's been a systematic. And so, and then you have coaches that feel like we're under attack.

Even the ones that are really good and have the kids, um, mindset at the forefront. So that's, that's the coach first. Thank you. Thank you, Anne. Uh, Lisa, what are your, so in my opinion, everybody wants to win and we're never going to change that. And the kids want to win. The parents want to win. The coaches want to win.

Everyone wants to win, but when you coach in a very positive manner, it takes longer. It takes so much longer. And if we can educate more, you know, the coaches and the clubs, I stand in my lobby and I talk all the time to the parents. I stand in the gym every day. I'm reminding the coaches, but it can happen.

And it's proven that being positive is a, is a way it's way better. It's way it's healthier. It's N we can win being positive. There are a lot of, not a lot. There are coaches on our national staff that coach in a positive way, and their kids are doing amazing. And that's what we have to focus on. And it's just going to take time.

And even last year, I spoke with a high level coach and they're like, well, we're never going to win this, this Olympics, you know, everything's changing and there's no discipline. And, you know, Thinking to myself again, like really like this is going to take time. This is a long time, honey. And it just still breaks my heart that somebody wouldn't look at a child and care about their soul.

And I just, yeah, I just don't understand that. Right. Thank you so much. So, um, Monica Rollen has a question. Yes. Hi. Um, first I want to commend you all on being the change within USA G um, I can only imagine that there has been backlash, um, of some kinds or many kinds, you know, from the NGB for actually, you know, going out on a limb and going against the culture to, to be the change



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from within, um, and it's unfortunate, but USAID is not the only NGB suffering from this kind of like toxic culture really starts from the top down at the USO PC level.

Um, and we're working to change that, um, in many other ways, but I've been around the Olympics for a long time and it took me probably 10 years, you know, to really figure out it's hard to change one NGB when the U S OBC won't change their culture. Um, not that it's impossible and I'm happy to hear that there really are better people at USA G that they haven't just shuffled the deck, um, and made it look like they've made change, but they haven't.

Um, but in the meantime, I think that education is really important. And while it's great to educate the kids to, you know, make them aware of what's happening, I think really the parents and the coaches, um, have a lot bigger responsibility. And I'm wondering as a gym owner, how can you implement kind of that education?

And, and is that something that all gym owners. You know, would be willing to do, to do, I don't know if it's a one day a month or w you know, when you sign up to become a member of the gym, every parent has to take the training and not just an online training, because people kind of click through those things and don't really process it, you know, or just get to the end and get their certificate, um, similar to kind of the safe sport training right now.

Um, so I'm wondering as a, as a gym owner, how hard would it be, and is there something that USAID can do to hold everybody accountable for that kind of training? I don't know about USA G but I know in my gym, I have like daily reminders everywhere. And, you know, it's always about being positive. I have my coaches responsibilities.

We talk about it every day, child first, you know, their feelings. I have daily reminders that when they check in and they clock in, they read a daily might they have to read our philosophy. Like I force it every single day. Um, I, I inform them all the time, why we are better than the other gyms, you know?

And I, and I mentioned earlier that why does every gym have a different philosophy, a different culture? You know, so I remind my staff about that all the time. I remind them, you know, what makes us super teacher, you know, and all the yellow things highlighted are all positive things. It's not, you could teach your Cartwheel or we're going to win the next competition.

And then we have meetings with our team, you know, coaches, but the team coaches are always involved with the recreational everyday coaches, because we can't separate them. Once you separate them, then you have this different style of teaching and coaching in the, in the facility. Um, but if USA gymnastics did have, you know, some kind of training for the coaches to go through, you know, that might really, really help.

And what about for parents? What about training for parents? I mean, that's the Jim club's responsibility. I just, it's really hard to do that. You have some cultures in some gyms, the parents rule the gym. Um, in other places you walk into the parents, you know, they want more information. They want to know what's going on and, you know, Those owners should be giving it to them, not being afraid to give it to them, but could you, can you make it a precondition for a child to sign up that the parents goes through training that will help them to identify potential problems?

And I think, I think that should come from USG personally. I think each gym sets their standards on what is acceptable for their, for their parents, for their athletes, for their coaches. I believe in the trickle-down effect. I mean, I think the, the culture in our gym trickles down from my belief system and my husband's belief system and, and you sort of, you know, it, it spreads.



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Um, but I also think that, you know, USG takes membership fees from us as coaches, us as club owners and each of the children every year. And so I believe they should have the money to provide, um, you know, for every parent, uh, you know, some kind of a, a training seminar on what it looks like to be a, a good supportive, um, in the know kind of parent.

And I also like it, the one thing that really, um, that I thought was a good idea because judges, and in our sport every year, they have to earn a certain amount of credits they're called like CPE credits. And it's a certain amount of hours they have to earn to keep their judging status. So I feel like we could require that from coaches as well.

Um, and instead of making it a bunch of technical, it could, it could have some of these, these things we're discussing that coaches should know because we've all learned in a broken system. Um, but again, it can't be, coaches are already underpaid. They're not highly educated for the most part. I mean, we require a certain level of education in our coaches, but there's no USAID requirement.

Um, so I feel like that should be a free service, um, that, you know, coaches have to give their time to get it done, but, but it shouldn't be another paid course. Yup. So a joy, uh, stillbirth had a question for you all. Yes. I had a question for Gail, first of all, just thank you. Thank you. Thank you. This is just so brilliant and you're such a pioneers in the way that you're approaching this.

It's just wonderful to hear about it. I'm also a trauma psychologists and therapists, Gale, and I'm really curious as to what specific neuroscientific literature you're referring to. Um, I certainly would a hundred percent agree that a healthier child, uh, is a child that has been given trust and has been, uh, provided all their whole emotional development is attended to, but I don't know enough about gymnastics to be 100% sure that a 10 out of 10 is a child who has all that.

So is there neuroscience that helps us know that not only what a healthy whole total child be better fostered in an environment that is sensitive, what a better so-called gymnast. Hm. So let me make sure. All right. Um, so I love that question because you're my people like with the, in the clinical, like trauma psychology world and being able to look at it from that land, look at gymnastics from that lens.

Um, it's really, it makes my heartbeat these days. How can we make this better, make us a better sport? Um, there is, uh, so first of all, I go back to basics and just understanding just basic psychology, which is establishing trust and safety and transparency. We just look at a trust model that you can get information about that kind of anywhere you have open communication, you have dialogue, you have, um, you know, just creating a sense of safety because then guards kind of go down, um, changing parent culture, um, is being allowed.

Parents to kinda have a voice for their child doesn't mean that they should run the gym, right. They shouldn't, but it's kind of a shared power. Um, for the sake of the child, as far as research on there's an organization, I started taking classes with call coaches, right? I think, um, they, there are, there are trainings that are out there, um, and they are a fee, there are a cost of course, um, that are using neuroscience to how to use the neuroscience that's out there and implement it into coaching.

Um, so there are, there are some, I actually, I have resources, um, and you know, that I can pass along to you that I have found. Um, but yeah, coaches, coaches rising is the one I'm thinking of at the moment. So yeah. So, uh, now we have a question from, uh, Theresa Weezer and, uh, who's with national children's Alliance.



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Thank you all for your testimony. My question relates to standards of practice in your field. You've been, you know, really describing the amount of autonomy and individuality that both coaches have and clubs and gyms have. And I'm wondering, wondering, aren't there, you know, written standards of practice that both gym owners and coaches are expected to adhere to, at least as it regards to, you know, child safety, not from the point of view of child sexual abuse, necessarily, although that's critically important and safe sport, you know, has some responsibility for that.

But just in terms of other things like child development and the physical safety of children, you know, uh, dealing with sports injuries, those kinds of things. Are there, standards of practice,

Lisa, you want to take this one? I feel like I talked too much. They, they offer trainings and they offer different standards, but there's nothing set. There's no, there's no one, you know, guiding us. I mean, we have our safety certification. Like we have to give them that there is a safety certification. It does kind of touch a little bit on some of these topics, but it's the same certification.

And like, I, I can take it without reading every instill ACE it every time, like it's, it's not new information. Yeah. And I know many coaches who have someone else take that test for. I know specifically, but it's just interesting because you know, you are a part of a large system there, thousands, you know, of clubs and gyms.

And, you know, I had a large system myself, not quite that big, but, um, I can't imagine if everyone was just sort of told, you know, make it up for yourself. I think that, that I can't, you know, we have the worst, we're still a private business, you know? So, so how much, and then how does your liability insurance work do you apply equally?

Does USA G we apply individually. So, so every gym has its own individual coverage. Yes. Is it a requirement of USA G that you have a certain level of coverage or no, but I think it's a requirement of your township, not the certain level, but just that you have it, it could also be in some states, a state requires a state law requirement, but, um, but it, I guess the system that we're hearing described is NGB, you guys are sending money up to the NGB.

Yeah. Um, but, and then we're a member, then you're a member of do it and that's it. Well then as coach, so as a, as a, as a business owner, you just pay a fee as a coach, you have to go through a background check, um, and a safety certification and those expire, I don't even remember Lisa, what is it? Safety every four years.

Um, wow. Um, but you know, sometimes there's minor modifications. Like there's been some modifications since all this scandal, so there's more, um, recognizing abuse and the safety certification. But what I would like to see is that there was just actual courses. Like I can, I can look at Tammy Biggs and I can, I can Google her.

She's one of the national staff and I can learn so many different ways to teach the best backhand spring and this and that. And I, I just wished that USG would start having a library of developmental psych and, and, and physical development of children that we could log in and watch. And it's like, okay, every year you have to earn two credits, like whatever, but what happens if you quit paying the dues?

What's the, then you're just a private business. That's not affiliated with a, with an NGB. My business does not have to be a USA G member club. Um, and there's been a lot of businesses that have broken from USA G because they don't want to be affiliated. Yeah, mine has. We, we just joined national gymnastics associates and I'm not going to join USA gymnastics until I see.



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And I know enough about the changes going forward. Yes. So we actually paid our fees. Can you explain what that, what this new organization is? Well, I know the people who started it were part of USA gymnastics for a long time. And as human beings, I really like them. And, um, they, they were judges and they've been around the block.

So I'm just going to give it a chance and see, as far as the competition level though, we don't know what's going to happen because the, the Mo uh, comp competitive wise USA gymnastics, is it that's, you know, right into a competition. That's, you know, from USA G if he wants it, that would could, yeah. Yeah. If you have kids that are trying to get scholarships, it's, it's hard to leave USAID, but we've talked a lot about maybe our lower level kids not competing at USG.

And then, you know, as they get to a higher level that we filter them in, but honestly, I'm hoping USA USG is gonna, is gonna do their part and make the changes that I know that there's a lot of new leadership there. And I'm, I'm hoping that they can convince all of us college coaches I've talked to many college coaches and they are not married to the idea of, you know, looking at a gymnast or USA gymnastics.

They are dealing with clubs right now. They can't even go into clubs. So they're recruiting online, we're doing virtual recruiting. Yeah. And so you don't need USA gymnastics for that. And I mean, I checked in with all of them because our girls want to get a college scholarship. Right. But you have to find a way to compete against similar athletes.

And that's where you don't have as much of a pool to compete with. Well, who organizes the national championship? Is that USA G yes. You have to be a member to compete to USA, G national championship. There's other national championships. It's just USA. GS has historically been the highest. Or the most prestigious.

Right. Right. So, so it's, it's to your athlete's advantage to be a member.

I mean, unless things change, if a bunch of clubs join NGA, then it's not gonna be, as you know, I mean, it's, it's really where where's the trend going to go. So, um, so Jim carpenter had an interesting question. Uh, Jim, do you want to ask it about the individual sport issue? I, so I sort of got an answer from one of the other people.

Uh, I think it'd be interesting to hear. I was wondering if there's any distinction between team sports and individualized sports. So, um, I recognize we see abuse in team sports as well, but you see anything in terms of swimming, diving, uh, gymnastics, where there's a focus on an individual relationship between the coach and the participant, um, versus, uh, coaching a team, recognizing that there's still going to be individual attention on the team level, but do you see any difference in the level of abuse or, uh, type of abuse versus team sports versus individualized sports, sexual predators are drawn to, you know, sports that give them access.

So, I mean, we've had, I, I don't know the statistics, but some of the sexual predators that like I know Marvin sharp, um, was taking a lot of pictures of his athletes and there was a lot of internet sharing and so on and so forth. So I think if you have, um, you know, an evil pedophile that they might try to join an organization that gets us access to what they're wishing to find.

Um, but you know, that goes from the Catholic church to, to diving. So I mean, the fact that the girls are in leotards probably plays a factor, but it's not like other sports don't have it. Yeah. I mean, we know among youth sports, uh, one of the most prolific, uh, arenas for sex abuse is soccer. No, Yeah,



sadly, but also us, uh, gymnastics sounds unregulated here, um, and needs a lot more regulation, I think, but soccer, no regulation.

I mean, it's just, it's a free for all. And the kids really don't have any, uh, protection. Uh, so for those of you who have, uh, kids and grandkids playing soccer, uh, go stand on the side of the field. Uh, yeah. But, um, I mean, pedophiles look for access to children. So any, any of those youth sports could be susceptible, right?

Yup, absolutely. So, um, I mean, we could talk all day to you because you are really giving us some amazing material to be able to, um, start crafting our recommendations. Um, we only about we only have four minutes left, so, um, if, if, uh, if we could start what let's start with Lisa, and do you have just a few closing remarks you'd like to make sure the, um, the commission hears, I did want to mention that, um, the positive coaching Alliance is something that I looked at and it was way before the Larry [01:30:00] Nassar thing came out.

Um, all of that, I just always, I loved it. It, and they make videos for parents that are so friendly for them. And we did require our parents on our teams to go through that training. I don't know if they sat and actually listened to it one night, we invited everyone in and we showed a video of it. Um, but that I think is really, really good, you know, but it's not USA gymnastics, but they do offer it.

It's something that, you know, I think as a gym owner and I'm a coach also, it's, it's my responsibility. And I just have to train my coaches, train my parents and keep doing whatever I can do. And then hop on something like this and try to offer some help, you know, where I can think that way and not let a coach stay on your staff when you don't feel a hundred percent about them.

And I've done it so many times. And it's just the biggest thing I can say to an owner is just don't do it. Amen. Gail, did you have a few thoughts? Yeah, I, I want to make sure I'm okay. I'm muted. Um, I just wanted to highlight, um, kind of the neat thing about this panel is that, and is my daughter's gym owner and head coach and, um, which I think is beautiful.

And I just wanted to give her a credit because everything she said about establishing a safe and healthy environment is what exists. We left in an environment where my child didn't feel emotionally safe. And, um, not that there was anything like outright abusive damage, but she was walking away feeling defeated with high anxiety.

And in my field, I made the shift and I found arena. And, um, so I think there needs to be a highlight of some of these gems and coaches who are doing it right. Cause I think when we see that Ann has incredible success with D one scholarship athletes, um, that it can be done. And I know there's, I know there's more ans out there and I would love to hear, and I think that will help coaches feel a little less settled and allow a little less anxious about what's happening, um, because you, the, the bad coaches need to go, but I want voices like Lisa and Ann to rise up and be part of, be considered the harder conversations to making this a better sport.

Thank you. That's that's great. And you get the last word. Oh goodness. That was so kind of you Gail. Thank you. I think I've spoken the most. So I just want to end by saying like, thank you for forming this and, and being willing to listen to our perspective. Cause we definitely come from a different place.

Thank you so much to all of you. Thank you to the commission for as usual for your really insightful questions. Uh, we are going to take a one-hour lunch break. We do let you eat. Uh, but uh, we will be

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back at one 30, uh, and we will be hearing from Senator Richard Blumenthal. Uh, landmark legislation was passed yesterday and uh, we'll see you at one 30.

Thanks everybody. Yeah.[02:00:00] [02:30:00]

Good afternoon and welcome back to day two of our game over commission hearings in 2020. Um, this has been a remarkable, um, gathering, and I think you'll find the next few panels equally compelling. This next one is about, uh, the challenge of uniform prevention, policies and governance and oversight within athletic institutions.

That that's a lot of words to say, how the heck can we figure out how to create child protection policies up and down the hierarchy of both, uh, USO PC, all the way down to the individual gyms. Uh, today we are honored to be joined by, uh, Senator Richard Blumenthal. Uh, he, uh, very graciously agreed to speak to us on these issues.

It is a prerecorded statement. So it's actually before a major bill was passed. Uh, but I will be asking, uh, our commissioner Monica roll to describe that bill, um, after, um, the presentations, uh, we are also very honored to be joined by Dr. Stephanie Dalum. She is the, um, well now we just call her the brilliant one.

She is the person who, uh, put together what we're calling the tool, uh, to analyze archdiocese child protection policies in which will be applicable, um, to other organizations in the future. Uh, and she is a visiting scholar at child USA, and we're delighted to have her with us. We also have, uh, a really moving, um, set of concerns from a woman who, uh, was an elite athlete, uh, Alyssa Beckerman, um, but who was put through the ringer, uh, as, as we're finding out too often happens.

And, um, she actually wrote a letter which is really moving. It's an open letter to Mrs. Valerie condos. Um, and, uh, I highly recommended it is posted on the game over commission's website. Um, but we'll also be hearing from her. So, uh, please, uh, enjoy these presentations and then we'll be back for, uh, the question and answer from the commission.

Thanks. Hello. My name is Dr. Stephanie and I'm a researcher with a child USA, and just a little bit about my background. Um, I worked for 10 years in pediatric intensive care as, as a nurse. Um, part of that time as an acute care nurse practitioner, uh, in the department of surgery and trauma, uh, during that time, I took care of a lot of children who many of whom were critically injured by child abuse or child sexual abuse.

I dealt with perpetrators. I dealt with children. Uh, I learned a lot in that process and. I learned that protecting children and preventing abuse as much more effective, because very few of the children that I dealt with despite their, um, horrendous injuries were often recharged or the perpetrators who often never, um, went to jail or had any bad consequences happened to them.

Some of these children died. And, uh, so preventing abuse is more effective than trying to, uh, deal with the aftermath. Uh, I've worked the last 20 years as a researcher. I've published numerous, numerous articles in the area of child abuse. I worked for many years for the leadership council on child abuse and interpersonal violence, working in the areas of research and policy on a national level.

Uh, for the last several years I've been working with child USA and is in one of our recent projects. We surveyed all of the child protection policies found in the 32 archdiocese in the United States, uh, at the little representation of what that, of the amount that was filed since the pages of policies.



Okay. Um, basically, um,

we found 14 policy types that grouped kind of naturally into four different categories. The first area was the area of prevention. And in that area, we kind of group background screening policies. Um, the purpose of which are to detect someone who was unsuitable for working around children before you ever hire them, uh, child abuse, education and training policies.

Um, the purpose of which is to make sure that all of your staff personnel are adequately trained in recognizing abuse, what to do. If they see abuse, understanding perpetrator dynamics, those kinds of things, a code of conduct policies is, uh, policies on setting behavioral standards for how you expect staff to conduct themselves with children.

And also, um, including information on what to do. If you suspect misconduct or discover misconduct by a Netherland. Uh, sex offender, uh, safety plans, uh, in the archdiocese. It's not uncommon to have perhaps somebody who's a registered sex offender or somebody who's known to be a sex offender who might have a child who's attending the pair of school or who regularly attends mass.

And so these would be policies on how to deal with that person to make sure that children are protected, um, that might be having them escorted by somebody while they're on the property. That kind of thing. Um, under detecting and reporting abuse, we found two policies. One is reporting abuse to civil authorities and another is w whistleblower protection, um, policies.

And obviously if you want your staff to report abuse, then you need to put in place protections so that there's no retaliation against them if they do. So. Um, most of the archdiocese don't have whistleblower protection plans. Uh, the best plan that we found was one that was required of an archdiocese who had a bad abuse case and the county attorney, um, and civil self settlement in lieu of criminal charges against the, um, archdiocese, um, help write a plan and they put that in place.

Um, so that's a very important policy under caring for victims. Uh, we found three, three different policies. The first is victim assistance, and that's what to do with victims who come forward and say they were abused by somebody that works for the archdiocese. Um, and that includes things like pastoral assistance and paying for professional care, uh, policies on victim rights.

Uh, actually very few of their archdiocese actually have a victim's rights policies, but we found four that did, um, all of the archdiocese enumerated rights for the accused. And, but very few of them really enumerated any rights for the victim. And we felt that that was important, that they be recognized that they have some rights and then be advised of those rights and not be retaliated against her.

For example, if they contact a, an attorney for. And the third policy in this category is public transparency policies. And you would think that with all of the difficulties, the Catholic church has had around child abuse and their lack of transparency that all of the archdiocese would have such a policy, but actually less than half of them did.

And many of those were extremely vague. Um, and didn't really say much so, but those are an important policy, uh, under investigations, a lot of the, well, all of the archdiocese do internal investigations when they get an allegation of abuse, if they consider the allegation credible. And so there's policies in place to deal with that, um, there was five different potential policies that we found that fit under this category.

The first is a lay review board. And the purpose of that is so that there is so, um, lay input into looking at an allegation and determining what should be done with it. And they're there to advise the Archbishop who doesn't have to listen to them. Um, but they, they are supposed to be reviewing these things and making recommendations.

Uh, there's also investigatory policies and those are policies on how to conduct the internal investigation, what to do with the accused during the investigation. Should he be put on leave, et cetera, and what, and whether there's any protections, spin to be offered to the victim during that time? Uh, the third policy's handling evidence, we actually only found one archdiocese that had a policy to, um, handle evidence.

And again, that was an archdiocese that, uh, was forced to adopt that policy during a settlement agreement. And the purpose of the policy is to make sure that any evidence of abuse is preserved. The integrity of that evidence is preserved. There's a chain of custody that kind of. Uh, response to substantiated abuse.

These are policies on what to do. If you substantiate the abuse, what should happen to the accused? Um, how, how is that, um, how does that play out? And, uh, the fifth policy is response to credible, but not substantiated allegations. And a lot of the archdiocese don't have such a policy about a third of them did.

And these policies are like, what do you do when you have a credible allegation, but you couldn't determine, um, beyond a reasonable doubt is substantiate that abuse. What do you do with the accused? Do, um, many of them at this point, just, uh, treat the allegation as if it was false and returned him to his position.

A few of them actually have the review board look over the evidence over the situation and make recommendations, whether there should be any limitations, uh, should he be supervised around minors? Because many of the cases it's possible that that allegation was true, but, uh, for whatever reason, um, the Archbishop didn't feel it, it res re rose to the level to be substantiated.

So those are the 14 different policy types that we've, uh, types of policies that we found. Uh, next is that, um,

just a second. I basically wanted to show, um, just a representation of what it looked like, what our research looked like. So this, what I'm showing you here is, uh, these are each one of these little, uh, triangles represents the score of, uh, on archdiocese in the area of conducting internal child abuse investigations.

And this is the line here is the average. And you can see half of them are above average, half are below average as we would expect, but you kind of get an idea, um, 20. Over here, you see 24 points for possible. That's based on, uh, you take all, we took all of the archdiocese and we took all of their practices and policies in this area.

And we found, you know, 24 different things that they could do. And then you looked at what they actually did. And so, uh, up here we find some of the better ones, but they're still only doing, you know, maybe 60% of what they could be doing. And then some are doing very, very little.

Okay. So in conclusion, we found that the arch diocese have kind of a patchwork quilt of policies, of varying degrees, of quality. Many of them are missing critical policies. And then as I showed you in



that last slide, even when they have policies, they're kind of all over the map. As far as what they do and youth serving organizations, we feel need to develop standardized policies that are based on best practices.

And these practices should be based on empirical evidence and recommendations from experts in the field of child abuse. So thank you very much for your time. And, um, thank you for listening. Hello, I'm Senator Richard Blumenthal. I would like to first thank the game over commission for their ongoing work investigating Larry Nassar abuse of hundreds of young girls and women.

And for inviting me to testify today, I'm honored to be with you while Larry Nassar committed his criminal sexual conduct by himself is unimaginable. Abuse was facilitated and enabled by individuals who could and should have stopped his behavior much earlier. And instead chose to turn a blind eye, multiple institutions responsible for keeping amateur athletes safe, including the United States Olympic committee USA, gymnastics and Michigan state university repeatedly failed to act on credible reports against Nassar.

There an action allowed him to continue assaulting his patients with impunity. Nassar is innovative. But the fight to overhaul the system that allowed him to evade justice and accountability is far from over Nassar, exposed a number of systematic flaws that must be addressed to protect athletes going forward.

For the past few years, I, along with the United States, Senator Jerry Moran have led the charge to investigate this pattern of gross institutional failure as ranking member of the Senate commerce subcommittee with jurisdiction over the health and safety of us Olympic athletes. I've been honored to work side by side with remarkable athletes, survivors, and advocates to prevent future athletes from enduring, this kind of abuse.

Last year, we released the findings of our investigation and introduce the empowering Olympic and amateur athletes act to ensure that predators of this kind never are permitted to recur. We focused on understanding the alarming and dysfunctional systems that allowed Nassar to thrive and determining what legislative changes would help to protect and empower amateur athletes going forward.

Over more than 18 months, we engage with athletes and sexual abuse survivors in a wide range of sports and dug into the way sporting bodies and us Olympic committees operate. We reviewed and analyzed tens of thousands of pages of documentary evidence. We held several public hearings on the culture of abuse in amateur sports.

And we subpoenaed leaders who tried to evade accountability for their failure to protect athletes. During the course of our work, we uncovered really damning evidence showing misconduct by leaders at the Olympics committee, USA, gymnastics and Michigan state university. In fact, at one point we even referred the former us Olympic committee CEO to the department of justice for a line to Congress.

Our investigation concluded that coaches and powerful individuals within the Olympic movement were able to assault athletes of all. Because of the lack of oversight, transparency and accountability in effect, USO, PC and USA, G we're willing to trade the safety of athletes for metals and money. As long as USAID was successful, the safety of the athletes was a secondary concern.

The absence of these important constraints resulted in institutions that failed. They failed to act aggressively to report wrongdoing to proper law enforcement agencies, coaches, and other adults.



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Assisting athletes spoke to my subcommittee about a lack of education and resources necessary to ensure individuals could identify and properly report abuse.

At the same time, us Olympic committee failed to have an enforceable policy that would require USA, gymnastics, personnel, volunteers, and club members to report abuse to law enforcement and their respective organization athletes interviewed by the subcommittee cited confusion over how to file complaint about sexual abuse and misconduct as a barrier to coming forward.

After being harmed, others discussed the lack of clear penalties for wrongdoing as a factor that gave them pause before taking the courageous step to make a formal complaint. The us Olympic committees, ombudsman distributed information that athletes had brought to them in confidence. And as a result, athletes felt that the office was untrustworthy.

These organizations also failed to foster an environment that encouraged reporting by removing the fear of retaliation athletes shared with our subcommittee, that they feared losing progress towards their athletic goals. If they spoke out against coaches, officials, or other adult individuals associated with their sport, I want to say how much I admire these survivors and athletes.

They are the real heroes here and their courage and strength and perseverance are the reason that we were selected. What victimize these young athletes beyond these institutional failures, we're individual men and women in trusted with positions of power who prioritize their own reputation or the reputation of a national governing body over the health and safety of the athletes.

Nasser cultivated at coterie of USA, gymnastics officials that catapulted him to a cult-like status in the community and further protected himself by creating an us versus them mentality within this group. Self-interested coaches who benefited from pressuring gymnasts to compete and win, even when doing so was unwise gave Nasser more power because of his willingness to focus gymnasts, to train and compete.

When injured finally, even after courageous survivors confronted them with accounts of abuse, the us Olympic committee, USA, gymnastics, and other national governing bodies took shameful actions to conceal their negligence and fail to enact theories reform the result repeatedly placed athletes in harms way.

We introduced the empowering Olympic and amateur athletes act to change that it imposes new reporting requirements for adults with knowledge of any allegations of child abuse of an amateur athlete, and it increases survivors protections against retaliation. It also mandates that there be more representation of amateur athletes on the boards of the United States Olympic committee and other national governing bodies.

Second, the act ensures greater transparency and accountability throughout amateur sports movement. This includes giving Congress the ability to fire the us Olympic committee board of directors. The us center for safe sport would also be required to maintain a public list of all barred coaches and individuals so that these predators may not slyly manipulate their way back into amateur sports.

Most important. This legislation clarifies that the us Olympic committee and the national governing bodies owe a duty to care, a duty of care to amateur athletes, to keep promoting a safe environment in sports. Lastly, it will fortify the independence and capabilities of the U S center for safe sport. It prevents anyone affiliated with the us Olympic committee within the national governing bodies from working for, or interfering with safe sports investigations and requires the us Olympic committee to spend \$20 million per year on center operations throughout our investigation.



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And to this day, the incredible courage of the survivors of abuse who have shared their stories with us and with the world have moved me and my colleagues. I draw strength and fortitude from their unwavering commitment to work, to prevent the abuse of any young athlete in the future. I'm happy to report that.

We recently secured the passage of the empowering Olympic and amateur athletes act in the Senate. And we're working hard to assure the house passes it very soon that legislation and the work of the commissions like this one cannot go back in time and prevent masters' crimes, but your work and our work can produce changes that create a safer environment in sports and environment.

That's free from this kind of abuse. I thank you for your commitment to this cause for the great work that you're doing and for your giving me the opportunity to be with you today. Thank you very much. My name is Alyssa Beckerman King. I was on the US women's national gymnastics team from 1997 to 2000.

I was the Olympic alternate for the 2000 Olympic team. Then I went to UCLA and competed until 2003. They see that college gymnastics is supposed to be the light at the end of the tunnel for broken gymnast. I can say this is not the case for many, certainly not myself. Uh, having been through both the cultish elite USA world and then having experienced college gymnastics, I would have to say that college was in some ways more damaging, more traumatized.

So what's the difference between USA, gymnastics and NCAA. In a nutshell, NCAA requires less training hours on paper and at meets, cheering is more culturally acceptable. There really is no clear cut separation. There are parallels and there are direct connections [03:00:00] according to a USA website as of 2009, uh, there were 68,797, uh, female gymnast in this country competing out of USA, gymnastics.

This number narrows dramatically as a level of difficulty increases. There are many competitive levels ranging from level one, level 10, then elite for college coaches. They typically recruit level 10 for the week. With some level nine. I'm giving you those numbers. As of 2009, there were 3,248 level nines in the country.

1,684, level 10 in the country and 79 elites. The pool for selecting recruits narrows vastly as the number as you, the number of clubs, gyms, and coaches, uh, gymnastics clubs who have some success, tend to draw more talent to their gyms. And then this naturally bottlenecks the pool of athletes and shrinks down.

The number of gyms that colleges will look at are different from say college football, where it's, uh, by region and high schools across the country. This is a very small community

at the higher levels of special ed. All the coaches know each other in some, uh, all the college coaches develop relationships with these few elite clubs, Jen, while the average lifespan of the gymnast is short-lived maybe advancing to the top levels and staying on top for up to four years. If they're healthy, if they're lucky, uh, then college for hopefully another four years, if they're healthy, if they're lucky, but meanwhile, the relationships between college and club coaches span.

May decades. So when abusive situations occur, the possibility for a non-biased listener and a college coach is slim to none. There is no incentive. The college coach would risk getting no more recruits out of the already small number of elite and level 10 gyms that Jenise will be gone in a few years.



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And all the while that college coach had been recruiting out of that same club gym and will continue to do so for the rest of their careers. When I switched gyms, uh, I switched elite gin. I suddenly started getting mail from university. I had no idea had any interest in me. And it turns out that my former, um, elite coach club coach had a, some sort of grudge with that university had coach and withheld the mail that would come to me.

So just for an example, uh, they can do stuff to block gymnast from getting into universities.

NCAA gymnastics is very deeper into NUS Agee. Rhonda Faine went from being the university of Florida, had coach to become the senior vice president of USA, gymnastics, seamless that skipping a beat, brought Fain, overlooked the needs of a gymnast reporting, sexual abuse to protect the company, to protect you as a gymnastic,

the university also protects its own. Where do you think she learned it from when I had my UCLA hearing in front of four panelists consisting of UCLA faculty in a small conference room sitting at the same table, the mediator initiated our meeting by saying, well, addressing the panelist and saying, remember who you work for?

There's no system like safe sport in NCAA. The athletes need to be informed of their rights. I would recommend to this panel, a neutral party unaffiliated with the university that can advocate on behalf of the athlete.

I would also recommend a whistleblower protection policy. We're athletes who speak out will be protected from retaliation by the school or coaching staff. On the psychology side. I, I could draw a lot of parallels between my experiences and the culture of gymnastics. Uh, two studies like, um, the Stanford prison experiment or the milligram experiment.

But the problem here is accountability. In fact, just recently, uh, NCAA has sided with the USO PC, um, that they just don't want any accountability for the athletes that are under their purview for their health and safety. At this point, um, ironic really,

I would recommend promoting more psychological awareness all around. I recommend evaluations and regular checking in with coaches. If we want psychologically healthy athletes, we need to start with psychologically healthy coaches. We need consistent psychological oversight for coaches. Our team sports psychologist was present for only a select few team meetings.

Um, however, in this case, I'm going to say our problem. Isn't a mental block about competing. Our problem is trauma. We need trauma specialists, which brings me to my next point

for the athletes. I would recommend promoting more awareness for what therapy is about. Um, when I started college, I was sent to a nutritional therapist. However, I had no idea how therapy worked. I had no sense of whether or not this therapist was the right fit for me. I thought this was my only option for therapy and I had no trust USA, gymnastics, um, their sports psychologists was unlicensed.

Um, and so we would often get in trouble from, you know, with our coach, after speaking with her, uh, it taught us that there was no safe zone to speak freely and that transferred over into college. I told this therapist in college, what I thought she wanted to hear, um, It was just the wrong type for me. Uh, you know, I will say two psychologists in the room triaged for psychology here.

We have to treat the trauma before we can start treating symptoms of trauma, like an eating disorder.



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I had married many experiences also with different doctors throughout my career, where I would explain the pain and where it hurt. And they would often be dismissive, like, because I looked like a little girl and how much pain can a little girl be in really? Um, well in the culture of gymnastics injuries, it's usually met with an angry reaction by the coach.

Jimnez would rather wait until they could no longer walk or bleeding to profusely to hide, or until the bone is literally sticking out of their bodies before admitting to an injury to the coach. So by the time they actually make it into the doctor's office, believe me is that this is why a gymnast will also see the same few orthopedic sports doctors, uh, because they'll take them seriously.

Um,

I have a couple more things to say, but I just want to wrap this up. Uh, I really hope that what I say helps today. Thank you so much for letting me speak. Thank you.

You're on your

technology is my friend. Uh, so, uh, we are, uh, very grateful to both, uh, Stephanie and Alyssa, and we look forward to having a conversation with them. Now I'd like to especially thank Senator Blumenthal, uh, who has a lot going on in Washington, as you may be know, I, he will not be able to take direct question and answer, but I'm sure that we can correspond with.

Um, apparently there's some kind of Supreme court nomination going on, so, and he's on the judiciary. So what I'd like to do is ask, uh, our commissioner Monica roll, and who's very heavily involved in the U S OPC movement to tell us what the statute does, which actually passed that Senator Blumenthal was talking about, uh, and child USA supported enthusiastically.

And then I'd like to move to Alyssa because I know she has a limited timeframe. So thank you, Monica or no, thank you, Marcy. Um, I think, like I said earlier, it's a big day for us, um, with the passage, but it wouldn't have happened without Senator Blumenthal support, um, and also Senator Moran. So it really came down to like a tipping point.

Um, also with the army of survivors that kind of pushed all of this legislation more to the forefront, um, and it passed both the Congress and the Senate unanimously. So, um, just as a little background, we've been listening to, um, you know, a lot of panelists about USA, gymnastics and swimming and the toxic culture that exists at the U S Olympic committee.

And it's not just those sports. It's not just those NGBs, it's every single one. And it comes really from the top down, um, as background Eli and I were elected, um, to the sport of modern pentathlon board of directors back in 2004, after we demanded an election because they hadn't had an athlete election in years.

So the two of us were, I would say, fairly young and naive and thought, you know, But knew something was wrong with the sport. We knew athletes weren't getting money. We had no voice, um, a lot, a lot of the same things that we've been listening to are happening at our sport. Our sport was just small. And so we were able to, um, understand it, I think with a little bit more depth and get kinda on the inside track.

Um, so we set about changing things immediately. We were blocked, um, by the U S soci, you know, they want to have their culture maintained and, um, we'll easily just shut people down. Um, and then



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it's a trickle-down effect. So all of the members of the boards of NGBs want to be part of this Olympic committee it's, you know, gives them pride and they've been working their whole lives to get to this.

So, um, it really is a culture that starts at the top and every well, not every board member obviously, but a lot of them fall into the same trap. Anyway, we moved onto the AAC and then found that this, this culture existed, you know, all the way from the board of directors at the USO scene to the administration and everybody was drinking the same Kool-Aid except for us.

Um, so this has probably been going on almost a decade now that Eli and I had been working for change. Um, we were part of, I would say the founding members of team integrity, which is really chaired by Nancy Hogshead, um, and Ed Williams. They have been absolutely instrumental in leading this charge and getting, um, getting this passed so that there's change that we can, we can make, I don't know how many minutes I have here cause I could go on and on, well, we, we need to get to Alyssa, but I let's talk about the act real quick.

Okay. We'll talk about the act, um, empowering Olympians and Paralympians. There's, there's a few things that it does that you heard. Um, the biggest thing I think is actually the creation of the 16 member committee. That's going to be appointed by the chairs of the Senate, um, and finance committee or commerce committee.

Um, and that is going to, I think there's a list, you know, or there's people being. Being put together to be on this committee. When it, when it happens, they'll be given nine months to come up with their recommendations for how to fix the Olympic committee, really. And that's a really important, um, piece of the legislation.

The other things that does is gives, um, Congress the power to, you know, dissolve the board of directors as well as any other NGB. So for months or years now, we've said, why has USA Jean not been dissolved? That should have been the first thing that happened. And it hasn't, and they've been charged with fixing themselves from the inside and that's just really not ever going to happen.

So this gives Congress the ability to actually say you're no longer the NGB. Um, there were other ways to do that, but this is sort of like, um, the last, the last straw, um, more money to save sport. The USO PC will have to give \$20 million to save sport, which does a lot of things. I think it, and the bill is also aimed at giving them autonomy so that they can go and do the things that they were created to do instead of being under the thumb of the U S LPC.

Um, I, I believe the act also says one third of all boards should have athlete representation. Whereas now the law is 20% and a lot of times that's totally disregarded. Um, the chair of the AAC will also be a voting member on the, um, the board, which is unbelievable that I haven't been a voting member, but, um, that, that gives a lot more power to the athlete's voice.

Um, and then I, there's also an annual survey that the Olympic committee has to do of all athletes and report back to Congress and the white house every year. Um, an athlete survey, um, hopefully, maybe Marcy you'll have a chance to serve on some of these committees or subcommittees. I think it's really important yeah.

For signing or signing you up. Um, and I think that our group has a really big opportunity to, um, to give recommendations on how, you know, what kind of legislative changes need to be made, um, to this committee of 16 going forward. And I think it's important to remember the trickle down effect that the U S soci.



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Is on top and should be held to the highest standards after that, if they are held to the highest standards, then the NCAA will be also, and the NCAA produces 80, 85% of all Olympians. And those Olympians, you know, that go to the NCAA, they're all trained at your local gyms and clubs. And so if the USFC has these standards, the NCAA will have the standards.

And then these clubs that train hundreds of thousands of kids around the nation should have these standards in place as well. Um, so that's, that's kind of just the short, most important, most important points of the bill. Thank you so much, Monica. I mean, while the commission has been in place, there has been some good movement, um, as, as much as there are problems.

Um, but Alyssa, I wanted to turn to you because I know you have limited time. Um, but, uh, first thank you so much for your testimony and for your moving letter, um, to coach Val, I take it. Um, but, um, you know, from, from listening to you, it does sound like the wheels are off for the NCAA. Um, that, I mean, did you feel like there was just no support from the NCAA at all or, or that they didn't care?

I mean, how did it feel? Well, you know, it's a lot about where I'm coming from too, which was that culture of don't trust the authorities because they're not on your side, they're on their side. So when you're coming from that culture and you're injected into, instead of life, suddenly you're thrown into that environment.

Um, and you see that your, your college coach is, you know, really chumming with your athletic director, Cody, you go to that's their boss. So they were very good friends and I did not feel like I had anywhere to go. And I was alone. I was ostracized and it's a very small community. When you're an athlete, you really do have that close knit community.

So when you're ostracized from it, you have nothing. Well, and this isn't the first time in these two days of hearings where we've heard about ostracism by other athletes in your own field, Yeah. That's uh, that, that alone must have been, um, difficult. Um, yeah. Yeah. They know what they're doing. They know exactly what they're doing.

It's, I've, I've heard stories that people have come messaged me all over from all over different areas of gymnastics, uh, being back from the early nineties, um, saying, yeah, this happened to me too, because it's just, it's a well known tool. They use your own teammates against you. Um, and at the girls don't even know it sometimes it's very subtle, uh, how they approach it, but, um, yeah, yeah, yeah.

So, uh, James Marsh has a question for you. Sure. I Alyssa, thank you very much for your bravery and coming forward. And the important message you were able to share with us about the interplay between the NCAA and the gyms. Um, just ahead, a couple of questions, a follow up about that. So it sounds like there's less than a hundred elite gymnast, um, that actually are basically in the pool for recruiting for the NCAA or by the colleges of does the NCAA, do they impose any sort of, you know, like we know we can't, they can't pay for athletes that we know they can't like give them cars.

We know that, you know, there's, there is some rules that the NCAA has to follow. Are there any sort of similar rules for gymnast or are, you know, is the, are the gym seen as the theater system into the NCAA or does the, you know, the, the college, you know, NCAA govern institutions or, um, you know, is it possible to make it to the Olympics without being at an NCAA school?

So if you could talk a little bit more about that interplay, that would be really helpful. Yeah. Um, so the lifespan of a gymnast is actually on average, a lot younger than NCAA level. So by the time we



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get to college, most of us are veteran grandma's in the sport. Um, so, you know, it's you really, the lifespan we, you peak maybe on average around, I'm going to say the 16 to 18 year old range.

Um, some older, there are the exceptions, of course, a few female gymnast have gone to the Olympics after college, um, or during, but it's a few, it's a handful. Um, the rest really do peak before college. So as far as accepting money, um, if you want to go to college, you won't go pro they call going pro um, you need to maintain your amateur status if you want to pursue NCAA, um, scholarships.

So, I mean, I did commercials, I did stuff for USA gymnastics, a lot of advertising that I did for free. Um, I did an NBC commercial. I did a Delta commercial, um, yeah. All for free. Uh, so I was to maintain your amateur status, amateur status. Yes. So, um, yeah, it's a little bit different dynamic as far as the pool goes to, um, those stats I pulled were from 2009, so they are a bit dated.

Um, the other thing I want to bring up is they do recruit from the international ranks as well. Um, not as, not as heavily as they recruit American gymnast, but they do have some as well. So I have to admit that that's also in the full, so Alyssa, what was the response to your letter? Um, it's been overwhelmingly positive.

Um, and I was confused by that. I have to say that was really, I was ready for a fight. I was ready for, I, for years I've been ready for a fight on that. I was confused that everybody seems so supportive and, um, almost everybody, I mean, there were a few that were not happy about it. Um, but yeah, I wasn't expecting that at all actually, because, so I'm like unlike other sports, it sounds to me like if you look at football, for example, you know, the reason you go to college, the reason you play on these, you know, top 10 teams.

So you go pro and that's where the real money is. Um, it sounds like the Olympics and gymnastics is a little bit different. And that by the time you get to college, your career's already over. And so what they have to offer you, there is basically your life after gymnastics, which is a college education, a degree.

And of course the schools get the benefit of having all these top gymnast when they compete in the NCAA circuit. Is that, is that accurate? Yeah. So, you know, you do bring up a really good point. Um, actually there is a lot of pressure from USA gymnastics at the Olympics to go pro um, it's in their best interest that we go pro because then they get to market us and have us go on their post Olympic tour.

So, um, in Sydney, um, I remember pulling the girls aside. I know the ones that were going to go to college and saying, look, you know, they're going to pay you X amount of money for an Olympic tour, or you can get a college scholarship that could last you for years and which is worth how much. So you're balancing those two.

I was, you know, very adamant that they really considered because it may seem like a lot of money up front, but college is a lot more expensive than what they were offering. Um, uh, but there was a lot, I remember they were very conflicted. The girls were very conflicted cause it was a lot of pressure, um, you know, from USA gymnastics.

So no. So Alyssa, I think we have a question from Sharon Cooper for Stephanie Dalum.

Yes, I do. And thank you very much in the category when you were talking about insufficient evidence, um, with respect to just not enough evidence to go further forward with respect to taking any kind of action. What I wanted to know Stephanie was was there a company, a comparison from



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location? In other words, if you have a high-risk individual, someone that, that people have made allegations against or a person has made an allegation against, um, were you able to track that person across assignments, um, from diocese, the diocese, et cetera, our research really didn't get down to that individual level.

We were mainly looking at written policy. So we didn't really, I mean, we didn't delve into individual cases and they're in the, you know, what tens of thousands probably we do kind of know historically, um, you know, what has happened and, and to some extent that some of that continues to happen, uh, in that a priest here can go, um, to another country and, uh, really start over again and, and continue on.

Um, I think one of the things that was surprising is there is no oversight. Um, you know, Alyssa was talking about, you know, different things that could provide oversight. Um, there is none there. So to the extent that if a person perpetrates at one church, there's nobody, that's keeping a master list that he shouldn't hire them.

There would have to be community they're supposed to communicate with each other, but there's really no type of oversight. In fact, I think that, uh, the, um, you know, the Catholic church is going to be learning from us about their own policies. Thank you. I appreciate that because I think what I was, the second part of my question was going to be, was it written in the policy that there should be some kind of tracking for?

Yeah, there is, you know, I, I speak about the charter, uh, the Dallas charter, and that was kind of like some minimal types of standards was provided by that. And one of them was no transfers. And so that, um, that alone had no, um, teeth, nobody had to follow the charter until the Pope decided to make it a norm for the United States.

He didn't make it a norm for the world, just for our country, uh, in the, the rest of the world, they could continue to transfer, uh, at will. Uh, it was just here because we're the ones that had the press that was really breathing down their neck. And, um, um, and so th th that, I don't think that that's still in other countries may not even, they may, may, may continue to allow it, but here, all the churches have said that they won't do that, but that's only if they substantiate the abuse and then that is all individually done.

And it's really, um, up to the arch Bishop. If that particular dioce whether he decides to substantiate it, if he doesn't substantiate it, then they can transfer and continue on. Thank you very much. So what, uh, Dr. Steven Berkowitz has a comment, uh, this discussion just reminds me of a situation I'm currently in.

That seems, yeah, it's just cross-cutting. Um, so I, I I'm involved in a case right now where 22 toddlers, uh, under to where, um, it were kept basically in a false basement that was squalid, um, and abusive. Um, the daycare was licensed for six. They had a fake room upstairs and then would greet the parents and the in amazing stuff to have who ran this, it ends up that, um, she was, did the same thing in California, 20 years earlier and was, um, you know, not convicted, but, you know, lost her license so on and so forth.

And there was no way for the state of Colorado to know about that. Yep. And I'm raising it because this is exactly what we're up against. Right. We have all these organizations, all these agencies, all these small clubs, um, and there's no method nationally to ensure communication about occurrences and concerns.



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And that's one of the reasons they keep happening. Yep. And it's, especially, I was talking to someone from USA G this week, actually, you know, they're, they have no authority. If someone leaves the G it's, it's just like, you know, a priest saying, okay, well, I'm going to go a school by ice cream down the street.

And that's it. Uh, you know, they they're out. And a lot of that's because of statute of limitations, but, um, David Corwin ha gets the last question, [03:30:00] which is kind of his goal, but no, I'm kidding.

You're on you're on mute. David mute. Thank you. All right. Thank you, Steve. For that comment, I have, uh, uh, another story along those lines to share with you when we can meet in person, but for Stephanie and for the rest of the commission, how much of the so-called reforms in the Catholic churches procedures do you see as motivated to sincerely protect children, uh, versus diminished liability

that, um, I'll address it shortly and then I'm going to turn that one over to Marcy. Um, because, because I think that it might be 50 50. I mean, I, I think that there is, I think there's good people and they don't want children abused, but I think that that is not enough for them to change their policies, um, if to change their policies, uh, they need a big stick behind him, apparently.

I mean, that's just what we're seeing with them. The ones that have the best policies are the ones where the government has gotten involved and put the fear of God into them. Uh, the ones that haven't had that kind of stick behind them, haven't really done the work that they need to do. Um, Marcy, did you want to address that?

Yeah, that's, that's exactly right. And, and, uh, you know, the premise, uh, when Stephanie w this, this whole report was started because the Ramsey county, uh, attorney asked us to evaluate St. Paul Minneapolis archdiocese. And I was thrilled to do that and thrilled that Stephanie was available to come on the project, but, you know, she came back and she said, well, we've got nothing to measure this against.

So let's just, and she put together this amazing tool of what they all said, had to be done, what I think, um, you know, and, and we'll be publishing a series of academic papers. One of the most amazing parts here is that with the spotlight on the archdiocese, with the Dallas charter, with the spotlight report, with survivors every day with S with the survivors network of those abused by priests, they have probably improved their policies and most of any youth serving organization in the country.

Um, but there were, and Stephanie can, um, verify this, that there were archdiocese. That were absolutely pathetic, uh, in terms of their written policies. Uh, they were, it was as though they lived in another universe and frankly you can correlate some of that with those of the states where they weren't held accountable legal.

And I wanted to make one other point, which is a little bit, not really exactly what you asked, but it's kind of, um, dovetailing with Alyssa in that there's such a big app, big area of accountability. And I really just don't feel like we're going to get a handle on this. As long as we treat it as a bad priest here and a bad priest there, and the people that are enabling the bad priest here and the bad priests there face no consequences.

And that's what I see as the biggest downfall is there was a investigation believe the Philadelphia Inquirer, um, was part of that investigation. And they looked at priests who had been charged in coverups, and then they are not priests, I'm sorry, bishops, who, who had facilitated coverups of, uh, of priests.



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So they basically allowed them to continue to abuse and none of those admissions had had any kind of repercussions. And they, there was a third of the bishops that are still bishops today have been accused of this. And, um, you know, one Bishop was criminally charged with facilitating abuse and not reporting it, but now, but still the church left him and put the position.

So until there's some countability for the people that are facilitating it, um, the, the policies are hollow. And I w I would have hoped that the Catholic church had more of a fear of God, BARR. I regret to inform you. They do not the fear of God, but you're supposed to fear it. Not them. Yeah. It's supposed to be with them.

So, uh, well, another amazing, um, panel, uh, thank you so much, Stephanie. Um, and thanks to Alyssa and Senator Blumenthal, uh, Stephanie, and, uh, we will, uh, be, uh, striding ahead now on, in other youth serving organizations, applying these principles. Um, and of course the coming. Uh, we'll be working on applying these principles.

So thank you so much. We will be back in 15 minutes, uh, for our last panel of this two day, uh, set of hearings on the challenges of a coping with abuse as a family, uh, you're going to find it riveting, uh, is a mother and a daughter. I, and of course, uh, tryna is featured in heart of gold, uh, the documentary.

So we will see you in 15 minutes and thanks so much. And if anybody has any other questions, uh, Marcy, feel free to put them in touch with me. I'd be happy to talk to anybody if you something comes up later. Perfect. Oh, you'll be back. Don't worry. Okay. I've got this afternoon though. I've got to other engagements and enjoy your family.

Thank you. All right. Bye. Bye.

Welcome back to our game over commission a day, two hearings on, um, in 2020. And we are at our last panel. This has been an amazing group, uh, but this last panel is particularly special. Um, we had, uh, at the very start, uh, we had Jennifer say, start to talk to us about athlete a, uh, which is of course a documentary about sex abuse in sports.

Uh, and now we have, uh, we're closing out, uh, with essentially the star of, at the heart of gold, uh and her mother, Dawn Homer, and the reason that we feel. So, uh, and this is so important is because we do understand having talked to enough survivors now and looked at the system that this affects not just the one victim, uh, it's never isolated.

Uh, and instead it has these ripple effects that affect the parents and siblings and others. And so we wanted them to talk to us and help us to understand how this operates. Um, so, uh, as I mentioned before, our full bio's, um, are on the website, but, uh, let me just say quickly that Trinay is. Uh, leading national spokesperson for survivors of sex abuse by Larry Nassar and in the system.

Um, her mother, Dawn has a, Homer was, uh, uh, a mother to a number of athletes. I've never heard of so many sports in one household. Um, but, but she's a marathon or herself. So I guess they had no choice. Um, but also, uh, Dawn is, uh, with the, um, and medical supply company and is doing everything else. So this is, this is a dynamic duo.

We're going to see their presentation. And then we're going to hear from the commission in a conversation with them.



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Good afternoon. And thank you for inviting me and my mom speak to you today. My name is and on January 19th, 2018, I did my victim impact statement to the former United States Olympic team doctor Larry Nassar. I walked into the courtroom that morning is Jane Gobi 43. I had no intentions of my family or my teammates, or really anyone ever knowing I was one of his victims.

But after seeing Jordan Bieber the Olympian from my same gym publicly speak for the first time, I realized that the older gymnast from my timeframe that spent day in and day out with him were the girls that were likely of his first victims. And those that were selected to become practice bodies. As he perfected his lies and his grooming techniques, I decided to go public two hours before I spoke calling my mom first to let her know as I wanted to prepare her in case she saw or heard my name, I had previously told her and my sister that I want to do this alone, but being pregnant and terrified.

I knew that I needed her there as support. My impact statement, turned him from monster to human based on his reaction to my mom and my words. He went from this person. I didn't recognize where he was almost emotionless to the person that was my former friend as I watched him sob and break down. As I spoke, I remember seeing the Olympians and thinking, thank goodness for them as they would capture the media as attention.

But before I knew it, the world knew my name and my face. I became the girl that broke their neck. At 37 years old, I had to face the fact that I had been sexually molested the majority of my adolescent years and for the entirety of my gymnastics career throughout my life, I had heard rumors and accusations of Larry and inappropriate touching.

In fact, one such accusation was from my sister's teammate in high school. I heard how people spoke about her behind her back, insinuating horrible things about her. Personally. I remember her specifically because I thought to myself, if I can reach out to her and explain that the treatment was medical and needed, she would feel better about what happened.

Knowing now that her case was one of the force reported to police her being the first to have an assault kit done. And among the first not being believed after knowing how many others there were that had tried to stop him. I realized I had been made his perfect victim and his perfect unaware accomplice.

My assaults began when I was eight years old. They asked who made it. I was assaulted around 900 times. I spent every day at practice with him taking my shins ankles and wrists. I was able to compete on shin splints that were so bad that I had stress fractures, but due to what was referred to as magic his magic, I competed in one as what was expected of me, regardless of injury.

My parents spent hours, hundreds of hours, days, and weeks taking me to, and from practice doctor's appointments at MSU sports medicine in competitions, we were hands down the best gymnastics program in Michigan. And during my time we became the junior Olympic team champions. Our gymnastics family was much, if not more of who we spent our time with injury was common and in our sport, but we [04:00:00] had extreme guidelines how to avoid injury.

We had very specific eating guidelines that Larry created that we had to adhere to. We were to come in early and ice if needed. And we were expected at practice, even if injured, to sit on a bike and ride or to condition and not lose our muscle and physique. And no matter what you were taught to never question anything, period in our gym, Larry with loved and I mean, very loved.

He was the good when you face John getter and an injury. Larry was the middleman of a coach that everyone feared. You never wanted to be on the bad side of John and you certainly never wanted to





not be able to compete. The wrath of that came with more chin-ups push-ups and sit-ups than you can ever imagine.

And again, you were never to question anything. That was the name of the game. That was gymnastics. One of the hardest parts of having a case such as ours was the extent, this kind of trauma and heartbreak did not to just us as the survivors or victims, but what this did to families, friends and our community.

My father, after my day in court, didn't speak to me for months. Not because he was not in support of my case or my statement, but because he was so taken back that I had not shared my trauma, my truth with him until minutes before I went on camera, I never meant to hurt him. And I really didn't realize that I had, but he was beside himself upset that he also didn't get to have his chance to speak to Larry.

I know this might seem horrible in your mind, but the amount of family turmoil, this kind of truth can do and did to families in real life are more than you have any idea of in our case, it was our trainer and our friend. And in some cases, the doctor, but imagine if the abuser as a father or an uncle or a brother, my families are huge supporters of Michigan state university, something I was as well.

We are all from the city of east Lansing where MSU lives. I think the majority of my family understood my drive for justice against Larry and even maybe some of the other enablers, but they had no idea that the institution of Michigan state university, as a whole brought me extreme anxiety and anger as they continue to support the university.

I know that the students and faculty and athletes and coaches stood in solidarity with us time and time again, and I'm aware that some of these sports and coaches bring so much happiness to our family as we have for decades bled green, as we say, but the board of trustees and the leaders of that university called us liars money seekers, and many other hobo things.

And still today, five of us had any real change as an institution. MSU had an opportunity to be change-makers and pave the way for other universities to follow. And instead they chose to deny and pretend that there were any persons involved that knew of and could have prevented. A serial sexual assault, predator to roam free of their athletes and athletes to come.

My family also knew of many of the other enablers. Some were family, friends, some were their children's friends, parents. And I learned very quickly how difficult it was for me to be me and for them to be on the opposing side of justice. For some of these enablers, I learned how difficult it was for them to digest that possibly their friends or their children's friends.

Parents could also face consequences due to their lack of reporting or protocol. When they were told about the abuse Larry was doing. Now, I imagine that most things with the cases public is art, that we were given support, that there were therapists lines up, lined up in resources, handed out there.

Wasn't. In fact, the same day I did my impact statement and she allowed me to share this part of her story. One of my young 15 year old sister survivors bravely spoke her truth and then attempted to take her life only to be released a week later with a second attempt at ending her pain, I immediately began searching for support.

I was given the name of Kimberly Hurst at Wayne county safe, the sexual assault forensics examiners program in the city of Detroit. I set up a meeting immediately and she began helping look for





additional resources for our young survivor. She didn't know me for any longer than our meeting, but she cared and she wanted to help.

She explained to me that the additional work that they do at Wayne county safe and how they support their survivors. My one question was, why doesn't anybody know about you guys? She explained to me that the funding and the resources they had were exclusively to direct services, that there had been the staffing or funding capacity to do public outreach, that their services were typically offered to a survivor in the hospital following a rape kit or from a police officer after a report was made.

This is when I decided to work with Wayne county safe and to work in sexual violence, to ensure everyone knows about our organization, to let everyone know that we will never turn a single person away no matter where they are in their journey. And we will never charge a single penny for our services or support.

I'm here to share how we plan to take this model that has existed for over 14. To other cities and other countries that Wayne county safe will now be called Avalon healing center and will be a safe space for every survivor I've watched as our advocates spend days, weeks, months, and years with our survivors as they're healing has no timeline that our services never end for them.

Our work is honestly never done. I am here to tell you that there are organizations such as Avalon healing center that are paving the way for change. You see, I'm not asking you to start from the ground up. We already have the tools we've created them. I asked you today as the game of our commission to protect youth athletes, to join us in making history, to bring organizations such as ours, to support survivors all over the globe in ways that haven't been done before.

I'm asking you as the leaders and commissioners to know that I see you, and I see that you want change. I might just be one voice in one city, but I promise you I will be one voice that will never give up. So thank you for being on this side of change and for listening to me and my mom today. Thank you.

I want to introduce my mom and her impact statement that she did immediately following mine on that day in January in court, I called her around noon. If they have called court to lunch originally, I had told her I wanted to do this alone. That I, as I decided to go public, I needed her to be there for me, by my side.

For many reasons, she came within minutes and saw the media frenzy that had become as she sat there in the porch courtroom, she saw judge Aquilina, author words to other parents, and she sat there on a bench and wrote her in past statement on her cell phone. I asked this to be shown today, not to break your heart, but for you to see the real raw moment a parent, my mother had to take.

I asked you to think of the unimaginable. Imagine being her. She's my real hero. Thank you today. Thank you. My name is Dawn and Homer, D I W N H O M E R. And your daughter, watch the tiers. You have something to say. I just want to address Larry. If I could. Larry. As a mom of a gymnast. I want you to realize that you made all of us parents, unwilling accomplices, unwilling accomplishment is in your sick attack.

On our precious girls. We thought we were so lucky to have you. And as I've seen, you've made every one of these girls feel special. We were more than willing and confident in handing over our children to you. Our precious daughters, it's so sad and sick. It is numbing to be witnessing the disgusting accounts of the girls that you took advantage of it.



Isn't satisfying to see what's left of you, but I can tell you, it is very satisfying to see these young women rising up and becoming survivors and strong young women. They're the ones that are going to win in this. Larry, thank you, judge.

That was, um, brave. Um, but also so heartfelt and, uh, I want to thank tornado and Dawn. Um, what, is there something you'd like to add now that you've had a moment to take a look at it with us before, uh, the commissioners ask questions?

Me or my mom? Well, we'll start with Trinay, um, to add, um, you know, I think it's, it's always hard to watch those kinds of things and then speak. I've had to accept with the documentary that I don't watch the documentary before I speak. Um, because it instead takes me into a different space where I feel sad instead of empowered.

Um, so I tried to talk my mom out of watching that just cause I know what that feels like. So, um, if she needs a few minutes to take a second, um, that might be the case. Um, and I do work in sexual assault and, and I think I get probably the biggest question. People ask me, finding out what I do now is why are you doing that?

Like how, how do you do that? And, um, I don't think you ever wake up thinking I'm going to work in sexual assault. Um, now that I'm gear, I'm never going away. So I'll just leave it at that. And I mean, could you tell us a little bit about the, I take it I'm at the heart of gold is still, you know, being shown and there's still feedback.

How do you deal with that? Um, well, I'm blond now. Uh, initially I was having people recognize me and, um, those moments were not, I'm not an actress. I am not, I am no Jennifer Aniston. Um, so when people would recognize me, it was with crocodiles size tiers and in the asparagus department at the grocery store.

And I would see their heartbreak at them seeing me. And that's a really hard face to see when you've never seen this person and you're watching them literally break by seeing your face. So, um, I don't wear my hair up in ponytails like that. I don't have dark hair right now. Um, and, and, you know, it is being shown.

I do still get, I I've received after my impact statement. I got over a thousand, um, private messages on my Facebook. Um, and I wasn't prepared for that. I wasn't prepared for how to handle some of those, um, persons, because they were admitting to me a lot of times what had happened to them and asking for advice.

And I didn't have those tools. So initially for me, I really, I think it was more traumatic, um, to be that person than it is now, because now I have the tools and I've learned a lot about sexual assault and, um, what it's like to be an advocate. So I feel much more prepared for these kinds of conversations and questions than I was a year ago.

Two years ago come a long way. Yeah. Well, I mean, you're, no one would know that you weren't fully trained to, uh, to be able to be, do this. I mean, we saw you at, we held a, a, a showing at Penn and, uh, and you were as polished as you possibly could be pregnant in all. I feel like most people know me as like the pregnant girl, cause I've been pregnant in 30 cents.

So yeah, nothing wrong with that. Did you want to add anything. Um, yes. Can you hear me? Okay. My face isn't appearing, so I wasn't sure, even though it was very raw, that first day I'd actually come

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from a doctor's appointment and turned, I wasn't sure at that point, if she was going to speak that afternoon, so I was able to witness, like she said, many of the other girls, and as I sat there, I realized he used the parents.

Not as much as he used the girls, but he used us to get to the girls. And that's where I said, you made us unwilling accomplices and how easily we turned our girls over how we let them take our girls, take them in the back room that no one was allowed in. We were never able to question anything. Um, I even came to pick Trenae up a couple of times and one time they said, oh, she's at the hospital.

No notice to me one time they said, oh, she's in the backroom with Larry and there's blood all over the mat. So the lack of communication to the parents during the gymnastics years was just, it floors me. When I look at it now, there is no way I would ever let that happen again. But that was the way that Jim worked.

You didn't question anything. As Trenae said, you sat in a chair, you did not talk to the coach. If your daughter was crying, they would basically get yelled at crying was not allowed at the gym. It didn't matter if there was blood crying was not allowed at the gym. And it didn't matter if you were four years old or 14 crying was not allowed.

So it was a very strange culture, very strange culture there. And we went right along with it. Well, I mean, you had a star, you had someone who was, uh, passionate and who wanted, I thought that came across and at the heart of gold, you know, I'm just so passionate, so loving, so talented. Uh, it's hard for a parent not to do that, but what, so just trying to understand, were you, were you allowed in the gym to watch?

Um, and, and when, and I take it, you weren't allowed to talk, no, you were not allowed to approach. There were chairs that lined the one wall and you could sit there if you wanted to sit there, but the practices were typically three or more hours long. So most parents didn't and you know, you're dropping your child off at a trusted place.

You could lead them for three hours regardless of how old they were. And you knew they were being taken care of. There was no concern over what was happening with the girls. So I remember when my other daughter, um, was developing problems with her hands and I asked permission to speak to the head coach because she was too terrified to tell him her fingers were going numb.

And I was granted a conversation with him out on the middle of the floor. I expressed to him what was happening. And he said, well, she's done walked away. Yeah. I told Renee it's like, they were raised horses, you know, any kind of problem. And you're, you're put off, you're put to pasture, but for Trenae, there was never any question.

It didn't matter what her injury was. It didn't matter how severe she was hurting. She was at that gym. She did not want to be missing. You did not want to be absent because that was the kiss of death for you. You weren't committed. So, so we have a question from our commissioner, James Marsh. I want to thank you both for appearing today and for your bravery and confronting this.

Um, it really, I think shook the nation, your, your contributions, and really, you know, place so much of this that was, you know, so much mis-characterized prior to this testimony really out in the open, in a way that people could not ignore. So, but that was a really significant moment. And my question is related to that, um, you both basically were not prepared.



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You, you, you went into court, you really spoke from the heart. Um, and there were, as Trenae said, you know, repercussions. She had to change her, you know, the way that she looked and her hair color and changed her life and changed her career. Um, in terms of looking at the victim impact, is there something, uh, in the process that would have made the court proceeding easier for you?

And do you have any regrets and like the aftermath, how, how did that impact you? You you've spoken about it. And does that give you any regrets or is there anything you would change about the process that would have made all of those things easier or maybe they were easy and maybe you've accepted the outcomes.

Um, go ahead. Ma'am if you have something, um, I was just going to say, I'm having a little more advanced notice might've helped, but like you said, as you can see it, it came from the heart. It was very shocking. Um, and looking at a person that we had trusted. So for so many years, it was very difficult to have to denounce this person to the world.

Um, I did an actually just four weeks ago, had someone recognized me saying how I know your face. And he finally put two and two together and said, you were a mom of one of the gymnast. And I know Trinay many times was recognized. Um, there was quite a bit of follow-up from people and because we were so close with Michigan state, um, big fans, you know, season ticket holders, it was very traumatic for us because we didn't want to blame anyone, but Larry, and unfortunately, as time's gone by, we have seen that this could have been prevented if Larry had been stopped earlier.

Hmm. So, um, David Corwin has a question. I just want a really quick before we go, sorry, mercy. And the only reason I want to say, because I think the work that I do now, I realized how important that court moment was from a perspective of support after. So I don't think that people well, the prosecutors, the team that put that court together and made sure who was going next and that there was an advocate in the courtroom.

They were not prepared for the mass of girls that were coming forward. So they were just continuing going day by day and trying to organize that. Um, of how many more days did they were going to need based on the mass amount of people coming forward, where we did our impact statement, and then that was it.

There was no follow up and not that it's anyone's fault, but I think now looking back there should have been either pamphlets or flyers or phone numbers or therapists they're ready to go. I mean, there was a dog, a therapy dog, which we loved, but I don't think any of us knew at that time. I mean, I thought it was a police dog.

I had no clue that it was a therapy dog, you know, so I, but it was very helpful to have that kind of distraction as a therapy animal. Um, where I think, especially for myself, because my face went from being a normal person in the community to all of a sudden put on the zero on BBC world news tonight in a span of hours.

Um, it was extremely like the hours after the night after the day after I was so traumatized. And so, I mean shaken to the core that I wish that someone would have talked to me said, you know, we know you're in a state of trauma. Could we maybe get you in to see a therapist today? Could we have a group meeting where we all get on the phone?

You know, something from that space because there wasn't, and we did not know what to do, not one of us. So just to that question before we continue, that was a very, very difficult weekend. And I agree



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tonight. I think the only support anybody had was each other people were hugging each other afterward, but then you got in your car and you went home and then you were on

David Corwin. Thank you very much for your, uh, courage to share this information and your stories with us, and also for trying to make a difference for others and for the future. Um, and along those lines, is there a parent's bill of rights for parents of kids who were involved in these organized athletic activities of what parents should expect with regard to, you know, full access.

No restrictions, uh, you know, th the kinds of lessons that are you've learned, and probably some other parents involved in this situation, you pulled together. I'm not aware of any kind of parents bill of rights, but I can tell you that would have been extremely helpful because the indoctrination that we had to gymnastics once Trenae was asked to be on the team, there was a parent meeting, and one of the announcements at the meeting was 100% of your girls will be injured, but we are a gym that has our own personal trainer.

And that is basically the solution to the problem. So that was the relief we were get. Other than that, we were not given any additional information other than you will be raising a lot of money to support the gym. Those were the, those were the rights we had. It's heartwarming. Yeah. Oh my goodness. Um, let's see, we've got our list here.

OD uh, professor Fowler has a question. Actually, my question is a follow-up on Dr. Corwin's question, which is, you know, we're trying to figure out how to attack, um, multiple problems that seem to be a part of the exploitation of gymnast and other athletes. Um, and I'm wondering, based on, uh, what, uh, Dawn has said, whether an approach would be some, some education for parents in terms of expectations, uh, for how your child is treated, um, guidelines.

When you start seeing symptomatic behaviors on the part of your children, uh, whether this would be one approach, uh, to try to address what seems I think to the, uh, commissioned to be an overwhelming problem. Yes. I think that that would be a very good idea to have, um, expectations of how the parents can communicate regarding their child and the sport with the coaches, with the trainers, with anyone that's having access to them.

And that there is a give and take. I mean, I never once ever received any kind of an injury report. From great lakes on any of the injuries that Trenae had. And she had many, so there was nothing, it was word of mouth. And most often it was from other parents. So if I, if we had had in the beginning, if your child is injured, we are going to call you, we're going to relay what happened, how she was treated, what we expect on a go-forward basis, if she needs additional time off from the gym, that that's okay, that she's not going to be persecuted and not allowed to train, you know, in the future because any athlete, the first thing they want to do is get back in their sport.

It doesn't matter what sport they're in, but gymnastics is very driven by your face, has to be in that gym for as many hours a day, as you can. So parents understanding that that's okay, but allowing parents to ask questions and to be given information when their child is injured, does that help? Yes. I have a little bit to add to that because I, I get this question also currently, um, is what Jim is good as a parent from, from my peers and what Jim isn't good.

And, and I have had no way to give them answers because originally I would've said USC, G Jen, would it be a good gym? And I mean, after the experience we're having currently still with USAID and your associate, you know, recognizing that there are stipulations and their requirements from these gyms are, are not what, like we're talking about, where, where parents have the opportunity to raise questions or to speak among each other, amongst each other, or even to just get injury reports.



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I mean, like my mom's dad, I could have rolled my ankle and it's black and blue and swollen. And I was in the backroom with Larry for half my practice. I seen while he's trying to make sure that it's not broken and then I leave. And then, so my mom has no idea. I just get home and tell her I rolled my ankle and she has no, you know, injury report.

She has no process to what I should be doing at home. There's no, should I be icing for amount of time in. 10 years old. I have no way to tell my mom what I should be doing from a therapy standpoint for over the weekend of my ankle. That's swollen. So I think there's some things that should be able, that should be changed where I could say to a family, this gym is excellent because the way that they communicate and the processes they have in place in the protocol they have as place in place is excellent.

It's well done. People are able to understand what's happening at the practice and from a go-forward basis. I know that they're going to communicate with you throughout everything. So,

so, uh, I, Monica Roland has a question. I thank you so much for coming and sharing your story. And I, my question is really a follow-up, um, I think to Kathleen and you sort of touched on it now, um, as far as what could be done better at a gym level, um, in hindsight, unfortunately, you know, so that, um, they can establish some protocols.

What kind of those protocols might look like, um, for ensuring communication between coaches and parents and athletes. And I'm also still so shocked that USAID had never provided any kind of counseling. I mean, this was, it's just shocking to me. And maybe there is a need to have a mental health professional on every NGB staff, not just a board position or, and not just a trainer or a sports psychologist.

Um, but if you had anything else to add as to what, you know, what kind of protocols could have been in place, you know, that that would help gyms, not, you know, or be able to not fall into this trap. Well, you have one and this is what, what my work teaches on now. And it's not necessarily just for gymnastics or gyms, but for children.

Um, and it is well, one, I think people, especially people that have very strong religion, um, in their, in their family, they, when we talk about going and educating children on sexual assault, they think that we're going to go teach them about sex, what we are going in and, and the pushback when we get a lot of pushback from the schools predominantly, um, When we talk about what we want to teach when we talk about sexual assault is good and bad touch, obviously, but also how we Institute each child has five safe persons.

Okay. And the reason we select that [04:30:00] number is because one is probably mom and dad. One is probably an aunt or an uncle. And then one is hopefully somebody that has nothing to do with the family. And the reason that we talk about that is because we have no secrets and each child, even if it's mommy's Christmas present.

So if daddy says, this is a secret, we never talk about this. We don't tell anybody what we got mommy for Christmas, the child is taught to go tell two of those five safe people, the secret. And so when we have things similar, I mean, in sports and in athletics, if you have a child who's unsure of something that's happening to them, but it's somebody that's close to them.

And it could be one of those safe people that they've selected. We still need to go talk to two of the other safe persons about this situation. So that two other people are aware of what's happening and



that they're not having to be stuck with the person that's telling them to keep this secret and or doing this something that's making them feel uncomfortable.

Um, it's not just between the two of them that they're taught from a very young age that the safe people in their circle, they, if anyone ever tells them to keep a secret or that something's making them uncomfortable, that they have to tell that to two of the other safe people. And they do lots of practice runs.

So I'm going to, don't tell anybody that this purple crane is purple and then they have to go practice telling those two other safe people that they were told that that crane is purple, but we're not allowed to talk about it so that when they have something bigger, um, such as this or, uh, his situation as Larry was, was putting us in.

Um, but they have that practice. So that's just one thing that as we move into these conversations and from like an educational standpoint with children, those kinds of things could go in place just the same at any sport in any gym throughout. So a Dr. Sharon Cooper has a question. Much. Thank you very much.

This question is to a TriNet. This, what I'd like to know is from the standpoint of, um, being able to keep children's safer, do you think that it might be a good idea to have videotaping in the gymnasiums themselves, um, so that people can see how the, how the coaches are treating the, the, um, athletes and have, um, scheduled, but not reported to the, um, individuals, uh, review of those video tapes in order to try to, um, give feedback on a regular basis with respect to the emotional abuse that may be going on.

And then the other question I wanted to ask is that, do you feel that Larry Nassar would have had less opportunity if he had always had a chaperone, uh, whenever he was doing any medical procedures for the student, for the athletes, I'll start with the chaperone because no, I do not think he was excellent at it.

In most cases we were with a parent while he was doing his treatments, but he was excellent at navigating us. So one key keeping my mom talking to constantly distract any kind of thing, you know, how's this, how's your business. How's that? I mean, so constantly there was that kind of conversation happening, but also the way that our bodies, he was like the master at moving around tables.

So regardless, so no I don't assist, but yes. Should there be a chaperone? Sure. A hundred percent, especially when you're dealing with young children, um, and, and also an explanation of everything that's happening. So if we're taping this ankle, the reason I'm taking taping the sink close for this, um, I think that's an excellent point.

And when I, when I do talk, when you suggested the taping, I think also from a standpoint of protection for the gym. So, you know, people and really there's false reporting is very small. Like, um, 95% of the time someone's saying this happened to me, 95% of the time they're telling the truth. So the false reporting window is really, really small.

Um, So from a standpoint from the gym for their protection as well. I, I don't think that's a bad idea. Um, because I mean, even for my own dog, like when I send the dog away, for whatever amount of time they offer videos of what the dog is doing and, you know, and I, and I love that. And it's just my, I mean, not that she's not just my dog, but she's my dog.

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So I think that that is an excellent consideration moving forward, because everything is now on video. I mean, I, my neighbors packages got stolen and the police came to our door to ask us if we had video, which did to our street and we did it. So it, you know, it's not that it was taped forever, but it was taped 30 days ago.

So we were, we were able to, to give that to them. So I don't think that's a bad idea going forward for several reasons. Um, I think people will probably have an issue with that in some spaces, but, um, I don't support protection. Yeah. And I think it's a better priority. Sure. So, um, when, uh, at the heart of gold came out, um, I mean, you guys were really on the front edge of this, uh, in terms of putting it together in a, in a story.

Um, what was your sense of the response from the gymnastics community? Uh, at the time

to have anything mom, if not, I can go ahead. Go ahead. Okay. Um, so the gymnastics community is extremely tight and if you are against anyone in the gymnastics community, or it's a, like a little bit of a shunning kind of feeling, um, like Dominic Marciano, she's an excellent example of that. Um, I was terrified to be honest, not for the community, but for my teammates, um, to see that, and I did make the producers, I made Erin Lee Carson on the Columbia.

For over an hour telling me exactly verbatim, every single word that I spoke in my clip because, or in my, in my interviews, because my interview was over four hours long and they actually moved to the person that was supposed to interview after me to the next day, because they were like, we can't, there's no way we're going to stop this interview because it's so much.

And my, my, you know, my mom was there for that too. So she, um, it was, I was terrified of what my teammates were going to see if they referred to John getter exclusively. And I was afraid because I know, and I saw on Facebook a lot of times, and I was really, you know, upset to see some of those posts, but also realizing that that's the reality because some of the girls from my team were lucky and they never were abused.

So for them to con the concept of being one of the abuse or having certain conversations with John getter and him not reacting was totally absurd to them. And they were not on that team. And I, and I understood because they were lucky they did not get assaulted, but that wasn't the majority. And after that documentary, I had more teammates, private message me saying, who do I talk to?

Because I don't want anybody else to know, but you're already out there. And you know what we went through. Cause I did. And I talked about it a little bit, but they didn't want anybody else to know. And I got that. Um, and then we have a private Facebook group that we're all in hundreds of survivors. And I said, do you want me to add you to the space book group?

Because even though it's secret your name is there. So if you don't want some of our other teammates to see that you're there, we just want to prepare you for that. If I add you to this group, that your name will, will show. So I mean, the dynamics of it for me, especially working in sexual assault. Um, now I understand those pieces a lot better, but initially I was absolutely terrified to know what they were going to think.

And so th there must have been a tremendous amount of stress just around the release of the documentary and. So much stress. I mean, I have messaged since some of the ladies that were Rachael Denhollander, she's obviously amazing. She's been doing things and she's, she's got no fear. That woman is like, wouldn't want to be on the flip side of her.



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But, um, you know, some of the others that have had stories come out about their piece and they, the, the kind of fear that you have 24 hours weeks going into that is, is like, people are gonna see you standing on a pond naked, and you don't know what they're going to think about you standing there naked, and they're going to judge you and they're going to have their own feelings, but you are physically naked.

So, I mean, just from a perspective of what that feels like, that's what it felt like. Wow. Well, um, uh, I, I think David Corwin, uh, has a comment

come off of me. Um, my colleagues and I from Los Angeles, where the first in 1981 to recommend using video and interviews with suspected sexual abuse victims, uh, both nationally and internationally. Uh, and so I'm something of a video enthusiast. My question is yes, archival video provides a safety, but what are your thoughts and feelings about contemporaneous live feeds?

We now have the ability to encrypt those feeds to make sure that they're not going elsewhere, but that would give parents up. You know, people authorize people, the ability to see what's happening with their child when they're not there. Just thoughts, reactions. Is that for Trinay or it's for either Dawn or Tranio

tornado? Do you have thoughts? I mean, I, I do. I'm I'm, you know, I work with trafficking. I mean, we work in human trafficking and, and there is that surveillance of sorts. Consistent. I mean, that's how people, you know, find trafficking, um, perpetrators, but, um, I don't think, I think there's always a fear for everyone.

I mean, even with Facebook that you can be, you can, they're always listening that people don't like that, that thought of you always being kind of watch in a sense. Um, but I think as we move forward and as we're talking about children and, um, sexual abuse or sexual assault, I mean, I think that you have to think big picture.

So, and I think you have to think where we're going as a globe. I mean, we're going into the direction of technology and video and, and all and all of that. So who, who is making sure that, that black market isn't getting, you know, child pornography or those traffickers are that someone's watching them or keeping an eye out for them and watch, you know, there's a lot that I think that going forward, we have to be open-minded to, because we can't stay in 1990 or 2000.

I mean, we, we need to be where 2020 is, and people have more access to technology and video. And I think that if somebody isn't monitoring for safety purposes, people are going to take advantage of that. So I don't think it's a bad idea. I'm not against it. I understand why people don't like Facebook listening all the time.

I get that perspective, but I'm also on the flip side of trafficking and I understand how they're caught. So I hope I answered your question, but from my perspective time, would you have liked to have had a nanny cam in the gym? You know, I've been thinking while Trinay was talking and now realizing what Larry was able to get away with.

I could like, like I said, he was a master of manipulating the table so that the mom's sitting in the chair who is physically in the room is completely unaware of what's going on. So I can see if someone wants to get away with something and they know where the camera is. Uh, they're going to be able to get away with it.



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So I wish there was a fail safe somehow that they could get away with nothing. But I just, my fear is if, if we rely on that. As the major way we stop this, I think that it will be manipulated. Yeah. Okay. So, so I take it Dawn that, you know, the idea of a parental bill of rights, um, would be a preferable to the technology fix.

Or maybe it's not either, or right. Maybe it's hand in hand. Um, you know, and I know that there are practitioners out there that are honest. My dad was a doctor. My grandfather was a doctor. So I come from a long line of medical family, um, being involved in this field and nurses. And, um, I work with doctors all the time and the majority of them, I would have no fear in them working on my child if I'm in the same room with them.

But then there's others that you just get that feeling. Unfortunately, there are master manipulators, like Larry Nassar, who could entice you into a conversation so that what he's doing with your daughter, you couldn't have even told anyone that buddy, after you left the room, I think you, I think he worked on her back.

I think he worked on her back. That's how good it was. He wasn't talking to her, he was talking to me. He was engaging me. Yeah. But then even with the athletes, he, he had a way of getting into their head. I have never seen with any other person where he could get them to spill their guts turn. I could have been in a bad mood for days.

Take her to Larry. Larry's like today, I see something's going on. Let's talk, what's going on. And she would spell whatever was going on. She had an amazing way and I'm sure it was part of his whole, uh, personality that he was able to combine all that into one and manipulate. So I couldn't see what he was doing.

Wow. Well, I want to, um, thank both of you for, I know how, uh, not easy. Um, this was both anticipating it and doing it, but you have done a tremendous service, uh, and we are so grateful to you for joining. Uh, and, uh, and I'd like to think this commission, uh, it's a lot of time commitment that we've asked. Um, but, uh, I think that we have gotten some amazing information the last few days, and I appreciate each and every one of you, um, for your amazing, uh, both expertise, but your big hearts, this is really been a worthwhile, uh, exercise.

So, um, let us, uh, so I we're closing two days of hearings. Um, it's not quite five o'clock, so it's not time for a glass of wine yet. It is COVID-19 so, uh, but anyway, uh, I want to say we've heard from a lot of heroes and thank especially Trenae and Don. I hope everybody has a wonderful weekend. Uh, and, uh, I, can't not say because my whole staff has told me I'd better say this.

Join us on October 22nd for a child USA's annual event, we'll be honoring, uh, we've got, we're honoring six awardees, uh, four unbelievable feats of child protection. Uh, and it'll be really, uh, inspiring. So visit childusa.org, and the commission will continue and we expect a white paper, um, to be issued by this and goose group in 2021.

Thanks everybody. Thank you. Thank you. It was worth pulling the bandaid off to have all these wonderful people. We really appreciate you guys coming. It's took a lot of courage. Yeah, you're doing great work. So thank you. If anyone, if I just want to put it out there, if you want to know more or if you need help or support we're here.

So thank you. So you serve all of Michigan. Is that where you're at? Yeah, we're we, um, have a center that we have in Michigan, in Detroit. That's been for 14 years. So while before our case, but,





um, going forward, we're moving the centers to as many cities as we can to help facilitate like cities. These kinds of, uh, resources.

So we're bringing in there. Wow. That's amazing. We'll be back in touch. Thanks.

Mostly made me be careful what you ask for

I want to give her your number. Thanks James. Either. That's the.

