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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4503

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April 21, 2004

Mr. William C. Martin  
Acting President  
U.S. Olympic Committee  
National Headquarters  
One Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Dear Mr. Martin:


As a U.S. Senator who is also a black belt in Taekwondo, I am writing to express concern about a recent rule change in Taekwondo that awards points and victories to 12- and 13-year-old black belts who disable their opponents with kicks to the head.

Taekwondo can be dangerous and can pose especially large risks to young teens because of their susceptibility to head injuries. I'm sure you would agree that the rules must provide the maximum protection possible to children. This rule change does not appear to meet this standard. According to sports medicine specialists, the new rule could lead to serious physical injury to 12- and 13-year olds.

The U.S. Olympic Committee has responsibility for overseeing the actions of the United States Taekwondo Union, the sport's governing body. In this capacity, I urge you to review the change in Taekwondo rules and its impact on children.

I understand that Rep. Henry A. Waxman and Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr., are sending you a separate letter that provides additional detail about the rule change. I want you to know that I share their concerns as well.

Sincerely,



James M. Jeffords

JMJ:lsb

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