



**UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
(U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION)**

**Hearing on “The State of Play: Globalized Corruption, State-Run Doping, and  
International Sport”**

**Wednesday, July 25, 2018**

**2:00 p.m.**

**Room 562, Dirksen Senate Office Building**

**Opening Statement of Commissioner Sheila Jackson-Lee**

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for holding this hearing.

Doping fraud is a crime in which big money, state assets, and transnational criminals are involved and honest athletes and sponsors are defrauded and abused. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Russian doping scandal, where agents of Russia’s FSB, the successor to the Soviet KGB, and other state agencies colluded to systematically cheat the Olympics over years. As discussed in the Oscar-winning documentary *Icarus*, they did this to shore up support for Putin’s kleptocratic regime, which steals in Russia and spends in the west, all while engaging in acts of blatant aggression against its neighbors.

Athletes caught up in doping fraud stand to lose out not only on their life’s ambition, but also on the prize money and sponsorships that sustain their livelihood. Take the case of Alysia Montaña, a U.S. runner who competed in the 2012 summer Olympics. She finished fifth place with two Russian women in first and third. These women were later found to have engaged in doping fraud by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), which means that Ms. Montaña had rightfully finished third. She estimates that doping fraud cost her “maybe half a million dollars, if you look at rollovers and bonuses, and that’s without outside sponsorship maybe coming in.” She adds, “That’s not why you’re doing it, but you still deserve it.”

Then there is the simple emotional aspect of being told only years later that you were cheated out of your victory. In the case of U.S. bobsledder Stave Holcomb, he was not even around to see it. Having died before his two medals were upgraded from bronze to silver, his teammate Steve Langton commented, “It’s definitely a little bittersweet that Holcomb isn’t here to see this happening. He worked hard and he earned those medals. It would have been very nice if he had the chance to enjoy them.”

I am very grateful to have Katie Uhlaender with us here today, who herself is a U.S. Olympian. I look forward to hearing your story about how doping fraud affected you and how it has affected international sport more generally.

I am also grateful to have Yuliya Stepanova and Jim Walden with us here today. Ms. Stepanova, your bravery in coming forward as a whistleblower is truly admirable. I hope that many more Russian athletes will follow your example—it is high time that they realize they need not be part of this corrupt system.

Mr. Walden, you'll recall we met with Dr. Rodchenkov a few months back. He is a courageous individual and his whistleblowing has strengthened the global fight against corruption in international sport and elsewhere. We hope that many others who know the ins and outs of Putin's corrupt system will come forward. Because of people like Ms. Stepanova and Dr. Rodchenkov, defrauded athletes at the very least know the truth of how they were cheated.

My fellow Commissioners and I have set out to stop the injustices occurring to athletes and protect whistleblowers in the Rodchenkov Anti-Doping Act. This long overdue piece of legislation establishes criminal penalties and civil remedies for doping fraud at major international competitions. It also prohibits retaliation against whistleblowers who expose doping fraud and enables those whistleblowers who do experience retaliation to sue the retaliating party. It is unfortunate that such legislation has become necessary, but international sports bodies have proven time and again that they are not adequately able to investigate and deter doping fraud.

Doping fraud should matter to any sports fan and anyone who cares about fair play. I welcome this hearing and this distinguished, international panel. I hope that this conversation will serve as the beginning of a global movement to clean up international sport, which has been infiltrated and corroded by corruption.