

## Outline of Recommendations and Other Findings

**Recommendation #1: Congress should limit USOPC's purpose to focusing on high-performance athletes and create a new federal office to coordinate and develop youth and grassroots movement sports.**

- USOPC should focus on high-performance athletes and its role as the NOC/NPC
- Establishment of a new Office of Sports and Fitness (OSF): Federal government has more of a role to play in ensuring safety, equity, accessibility, and accountability in sports

**Recommendation #2: Congress should make SafeSport fully independent so that it can regain athletes' trust and be held more accountable to the movement and the public.**

- Annual direct Congressional appropriations: USADA model for public-private funding
- SafeSport should no longer be funded by USOPC
- USOPC would recoup \$20 million a year earned through its trademark revenues to reinvest those funds in our high-performance athletes through additional stipends and support, helping to improve conditions that too often contribute to athletes' vulnerability to abuse
- Substantial increase in funding to hire more investigators and clear its backlog with less of an incentive to dismiss cases administratively

**Recommendation #3: Congress should reform certain SafeSport practices and reimagine the way SafeSport operates at the youth and grassroots level.**

- NGBs should no longer pay into SafeSport based on caseload
- SafeSport should no longer be permitted to close cases administratively because a victim declines to participate in the investigative
- Hire with greater consideration of candidates' experience with trauma cases
- Two proposals operate at grassroots level:
  - Regional system for handling these cases with the possibility of appeal to the national office in the most egregious cases
  - Accreditation system grassroots organizations

**Recommendation #4: The terms "amateur" and "amateurism" should finally be retired from the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic movement, and athletes' rights should be enshrined in law.**

- Amend the Act remove amateur
- Congress should recognize under law that athletes have certain fundamental rights:
  - Safe environment free from abuse and harassment
  - NIL rights
  - Right to seek redress free from retaliation
  - Timely/ advanced information about national-team-selection competition events
  - Affordable fee structure for national-team-selection competition events
  - Timely and cost-effective dispute-resolution process as it relates to competition and national-team selection
  - Health Insurance:
    - Align coverage for athletes in movement and collegiate sports
    - Generous grace periods around competition-event timeframes for coverage

**Recommendation #5: USOPC governance processes must be improved.**

- Tier NGBs for a more equitable and higher-impact distribution of resources and requirements
- USOPC responsible for reviewing/updating which NGBs belong in each tier every four years, Team USA AC would have to agree on the criteria for athlete funding and benefits made available to NGBs at each tier
- NGBC and Team USA AC would also have to approve all tier assignments
- USOPC should prohibit NGBs from using USOPC provided funds to supplement Operation Gold through their own podium prizes
- Direct stipend support to athletes should be increased every four years at a rate equal to the average increase in USOPC executive compensation
- USOPC should create a standardized, time-limited process for spinning off Internally Managed Sports (IMSs)
- If no organization exists, USOPC should create one for it or arrange an agreement with another NGB to take that sport under its purview until such time as it can stand on its own.
  - One option might be to combine two or more of the smallest sports within a joint NGB for an interim period

**Recommendation #6: Independent Athletes' Commission \*see summary doc\***

**Recommendation #7: Congress should strengthen public oversight of the movement to ensure transparency, accountability, and due process at all levels.**

- New public-oversight mechanism would ensure transparency and accountability by USOPC, NGBs, SafeSport, USADA, and the Team USA AC
- Options:
  - Inspector General for Sport
  - Dedicated mission team within the GAO an Office of Special Counsel for Sport
  - Expanded authority for the current HHS Inspector General:

**Recommendation #8: Access and equality for Paralympians and those participating in para sports at all levels must be improved.**

- Congress should require that funds raised from Paralympic trademarks be earmarked by to support para-athletes
- Stakeholders should build on the momentum of the LA28 Games by launching national nonprofit organizations to increase access to movement
- Congress should direct the newly created HHS Office of Sports and Fitness to establish dedicated competitive-grant programs to help state and local governments make public-school gymnasiums and fitness facilities accessible
- NCAA is encouraged to work with its member institutions to add/expand para sports

**Recommendation #9: Congress, state governments, USOPC, and other stakeholders should take concrete steps to improve equitable access to movement sports.**

- Congress should make certain costs associated with youth-sports access/participation tax deductible

**Recommendation #10: USOPC should adopt a new model for organizing U.S. bids to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games.**

- USOPC should use new model for US bids to host focused on coordination, not competition
- Future bids should be creative with scheduling Oly and Para, exploring benefits holding the two simultaneously

**Recommendation #11: Congress, USOPC, NGBs, and other stakeholders should partner to improve coaching at all levels.**

- American Development Model should be adopted universally as the foundation for coaching in our country
- Stakeholders should partner to create new opportunities for training/educations so all can better understand the American Development Model
- Encourage public colleges/universities to offer degree or certificate programs in coaching and coaching-related fields
- Tax-deductions to offset costs spend on various coaching related expenses

**Recommendation #12: Congress and state legislatures should think creatively about new and supplementary funding sources to support athletes throughout the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic movement.**

- Congress should identify creative new sources of revenue to support safety in, access to, and participation
- Strongly recommends public funding to support the development of youth and grassroots sports through Congressional appropriations to establish a new HHS Office of Sports and Fitness
- Congress has granted USOPC lucrative trademarks and much of its revenues from those should be used to provide stipends, health insurance, and other benefits for o athletes
- Congress should consider a federal excise tax on income from legal sports betting
- Congress should consider directing IRS to add a voluntary-donation checkbox to individual tax-filing forms, with revenues earmarked to benefit youth and grassroots programs or athletes' safety and well-being
- Congress and state legislatures may want to explore the creation of lotteries or other fundraising tools

**Other Findings**

**SafeSport:**

- SafeSport's lack of independent funding has both hurt its credibility with athletes and led to an incentive structure that deters victims of abuse and misconduct from coming forward
- **USOPC FUNDING:** *"The Commission investigated the way in which USOPC collects funding earmarked for SafeSport, and we were deeply disturbed by what we found."*
- NGBs divided into 6 tiers based on their annual revenues, and those in each tier are required to pay a certain amount toward USOPC's annual funding for SafeSport

- Each is charged a “high-use contribution” fee per case in addition to this baseline contribution—even for those in which SafeSport declines jurisdiction and sends the case back to the governing body.

### **Commercial Rights:**

- Athletes’ interests are not taken into consideration in the negotiation of licensing agreements benefitting USOPC and NGBs, impacting athletes’ earnings and competition performance AMP, while creating sponsorship opportunities for individual athletes, has had the effect of preserving USOPC’s ultimate control over sponsorship rules
- Athletes participating in the movement have little recourse when asked to sign away NIL rights as part of the National Team Contracts
- Athletes are discouraged from reviewing contracts with the help of an attorney, and few can afford legal representation
- Athletes frequently relinquish their NIL rights unknowingly, agreeing not to seek or accept earnings from their participation outside of stipends from their NGBs or medal bonuses through Operation Gold

### **Athlete Representation & Rights:**

- Athletes often lack clear information about their rights and responsibilities and a breakdown in the communication led to confusion about the dispute-resolution and arbitration process for team selection
- Poor communication led to broad lack of knowledge about how the Movement is organized and governed
- Not all NGBs compliant with statutory requirements for athlete representation, raising questions about oversight and enforcement.
- Ten-year rule for service eligibility may also not be the most effective method of ensuring current athletes’ representation on USOPC and governing-body boards.
  - Ten-year rule become an impediment to current athletes’ empowerment
- As of September 30, 2023, at least seven governing bodies currently do not meet the 33% minimum requirement
- Current statute effectively restricts ten-year athletes to selecting 20% of the voting members of each board (with the remainder of the mandated one-third representation considered seats set aside for retired athletes outside the ten-year electorate)
- Current Statute curtailed the ability of ten-year athletes to choose as their representatives those who may be best suited to carry out the work
- Increased athlete representation on USOPC and NGB has not translated into greater benefits to current athletes or deeper trust

### **Athlete Ombuds**

- Has not generated any measurable action to address gaps in athletes’ rights or well-being in the way athletes have sought

### **Pipeline**

- pay-to-play system of youth and grassroots sports, financial hurdles too often pose barriers for children to enter and remain in the pipeline and access the lifelong benefits of participating in sports

**Other Flags For Reps as NGB Board Members:**

“The Commission was gravely disappointed that some entities chose not to engage seriously with our study. Others, seemingly due to a lack of resources and staffing, could not fully comply with Commission requests. Either way, we were left deeply concerned that a key process for public accountability appeared, for many, to be—at best— an unwelcome burden.”