

## A LETTER FROM U.S. FIGURE SKATING LEADERSHIP

Dear U.S. Figure Skating Members,

August 12, 2019

Recent news reports regarding allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct in our sport have been heartbreaking. We support all survivors, and we encourage all victims of abuse to come forward and report it to law enforcement and the U.S. Center for SafeSport or U.S. Figure Skating.

As leaders in U.S. Figure Skating, let us be very clear: U.S. Figure Skating does not tolerate abuse or misconduct and there is no place for such behavior in sports or anywhere in life. Creating and maintaining a safe environment for athletes of all ages to participate in sport is of paramount importance to U.S. Figure Skating. We want to reassure you that we are working diligently every day to provide a safe and healthy environment for all members.

We want to take this opportunity to reiterate U.S. Figure Skating's historical record regarding athlete safety and to outline the many areas of outreach and education that U.S. Figure Skating is actively engaged in and planning for the future.

U.S. Figure Skating has a nearly two-decades history of having rules, policies and procedures in place to deter predators from participating in our sport and to address abuse and misconduct. Since May 2000, we have acted upon every reported incident of suspected sexual abuse. A timeline of these historical moments and the adoption of rules and policies can be found **here**; the key highlights include:

- 2000** – Adopted rule regarding Mandatory Reporting of sexual and physical abuse
- 2001** – Published banned/suspended list in SKATING; published online since 2005 at [www.usfigureskating.org](http://www.usfigureskating.org)
- 2008** – Adopted rule requiring mandatory background checks for all coaches participating in U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned activities
- 2013** – Adopted SafeSport Policies
- 2017** – Created SafeSport department
- 2018** – Expanded mandatory background checks for all officials  
Launched “Your Voice” Campaign to raise awareness and address reluctance in reporting
- 2019** – Expanded SafeSport department by hiring full-time Education and Outreach manager

Since 2017, the responsibility for investigating and adjudicating claims of sexual misconduct and abuse rests with the U.S. Center for SafeSport, which by federal mandate has exclusive authority and adjudication process over all allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct with no statutes of limitation. As an organization, we stand by victims of abuse and we must continue to take proactive steps to help prevent such harmful behaviors from happening in the future.

This summer, U.S. Figure Skating presented more than 50 athlete safeguarding seminars to more than 2,600 attendees at 12 camps across the nation. Age- and topic-specific presentations were given to minor athletes (under age 18), age 18-and-over athletes, parents and coaches.

Our Your Voice campaign has been shared at the club level with a goal of reaching even the youngest skaters. The campaign features our 2014 and 2018 Olympians, who encourage all members to report misconduct or abuse with the Your Voice motto: "Say something. To a parent. To a friend. To a trusted adult."

Athletes and numerous committee members have worked with headquarters staff to share real-life situations and offer solutions to help better protect young athletes. Our team leaders for junior-level international competitions are carefully selected from a pool of applicants and receive additional athlete safeguard training. In addition, a strengthened zero-tolerance policy regarding alcohol is being implemented for athletes under the age of 21 on international teams; and an education plan is underway to ensure athletes are aware of consent and power imbalances so that they are better prepared to deal with these unfortunate societal issues as they arise in all facets of their lives.

**Two-deep leadership** is a cornerstone of U.S. Figure Skating's minor athlete safeguard policies. To ensure two-deep leadership is met during an international competition, U.S. Figure Skating provides a SafeSport representative as part of the team delegation to be present during medical and manual therapy sessions and other situations that may require two-deep leadership for our Team USA athletes. This additional staff member's primary role is to ensure U.S. Figure Skating athlete safety policies are followed and to generally be an advocate for all our athlete's safety.

U.S. Figure Skating has enacted many mandatory athlete protection policies that are designed to minimize the risk of abuse or misconduct and can be found in **U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport handbook**. In addition, we strive to be at the forefront of athlete protection and we continue to evolve, strengthen and expand our athlete safety policies. Further information can be found on **U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport homepage** and the website for the **U.S. Center for SafeSport**.

These are just a few examples of the extensive work being done to protect our members, but there is always more work that can – and will – be done. Across the nation in seemingly every walk of life, allegations of sexual abuse are being brought to light, both current and past incidents of abuse. Each one of us plays a key role in keeping each other, and especially minors, safe while participating in figure skating activities. It is everyone's responsibility to raise awareness, ensure open and supportive communication exists and educate ourselves and each other on the behaviors of sexual and non-sexual abuse and misconduct. We welcome your thoughts, and if you have specific ideas you believe will further strengthen athlete safety for skaters, please email them to [SafeSport@usfigureskating.org](mailto:SafeSport@usfigureskating.org).

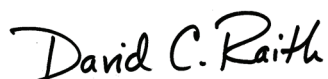
U.S. Figure Skating fully supports all victims of sexual abuse and misconduct and encourages anyone who has been abused or suspects abuse or misconduct to immediately report it to **local law enforcement** and the **U.S. Center for SafeSport** or **U.S. Figure Skating**.

We all play a role in athlete protection. We all have to look out for one another. We all have to speak up. We all have to use our voices. If you are aware or even suspect abuse – report it – abuse has no place in our sport.

Sincerely,



Anne Cammett  
President



David Raith  
Executive Director



Mark Ladwig  
Chair, Athlete Advisory Committee



Patricia St. Peter  
Chair, SafeSport Committee



John Anderson  
Senior Director, SafeSport