

**Helsinki Commission Hearing: The First Clean Olympics?  
Rodchenkov Act Enforcement at Tokyo 2021  
Michael C. Burgess, M.D. Statement  
July 21, 2021**

Chairman Cardin, Chairman Cohen, and members of the Helsinki Commission, thank you for holding this hearing today on my bill with Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, the Rodchenkov Anti-Doping Act. This bill is named after Dr. Grigory Rodchenkov, the former head of Russia's Anti-Doping Agency lab that blew the whistle on the massive, state-run doping scheme that led the International Olympic Committee to suspend Russia from the 2018 Winter Olympics. From 2011 to 2015, over 1,000 Russian athletes in 30 sports benefited from an illegal program executed by numerous Russian state agencies at the direction of President Putin.

Another whistleblower, Yuliya Stepanova, revealed information that led to the formation of an Independent Commission at the World Anti-Doping Agency that conducted an investigation, finding a "deeply-rooted culture of cheating" existed in Russia. We heard from Yuliya Stepanova and Jim Walden, the lawyer for Dr. Rodchenkov, during a Helsinki Commission hearing in July 2018. Also present was Katie Uhlaender, who had been defrauded and cheated out of an Olympic medal as a result of the Russian doping scheme. No athlete should be subjected to doping, either as the victim of a state-run doping scheme or as a clean competitor.

The United States is the largest sovereign contributor to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), which is meant to uphold the rules and regulations against doping fraud in international competitions. Unfortunately, WADA has not succeeded in fulfilling its mission. Even after the revelation of Russia's state-sponsored doping scheme, WADA was not able to verify the authenticity of all drug-test samples provided

by Russia as part of Roadmap to Compliance agreement. WADA remains incapable of fulfilling its mission with complete transparency and accuracy. According to an article from the Economist, between 10 and 14 percent of athletes in Tokyo might be cheating.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that Russia remains intent on achieving perceived international renown and prestige, no matter the cost. I am encouraged that the Russian national team will be officially banned from the Tokyo Olympics that begin this week but remain concerned that Russian athletes will still be able to compete under the Russian Olympic Committee flag. This is not a strong enough response for a country that knowingly and systematically doped thousands of their athletes and tried to get away with it, even after they were caught.

But the doping program goes beyond just harming clean athletes. President Putin views this type of illegal scheme as a geopolitical tool to characterize the West as unfair and oppressive. Two years ago, the U.S. Justice Department indicted seven Russian military intelligence officials for a cyberattack on U.S. and other international organizations for exposing Russia's state-run doping scheme and protecting the whistleblowers, namely Dr. Rodchenkov.

The Rodchenkov Anti-Doping Act would combat this type of illegal doping scheme and also limit Russia's sphere of influence as they seek to undermine Western values around the world. The bill criminalizes knowingly facilitating a doping scheme in a major international sport competition where U.S. athletes are competing and the competition organizer receives sponsorship or financial support from a U.S. entity. The

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2021/07/14/sport-is-still-rife-with-doping>

bill also allows U.S. citizens to pursue civil action against deceptive competition and provides protection for whistleblowers.

Congress passed the Rodchenkov Anti-Doping Act, and President Trump signed the bill into law in December 2020, to ensure that athletes rights are respected, whistleblowers are protected, and criminals are brought to justice. This week, our American athletes are preparing for the opening competitions of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Team USA includes 31 athletes from the great State of Texas. These athletes, who have put in the hard work and dedication to get to the biggest stage in the world, should not have to wonder if their competitors will be clean and fair. I look forward to reviewing the statements made in today's hearing and to the strong enforcement promised by WADA at the Tokyo Olympics.