

**Statement by Craig Maurizi to the United States Senate Commerce Committee,
April 18, 2018**

One of the saddest things you will hear in almost every case where a child was abused by an authority figure in Olympic sports is the number of years it took for any action to occur.

In my case, the abuse began nearly 40 years ago when I was 13, I reported it to my sport's governing body, The US Figure Skating Association, nearly 20 years ago. And my abuser was suspended from coaching less than two months ago.

My story is a case history of the power of abusers and organizations to silence powerless child victims of sexual abuse in the relentless pursuit of money and medals.

Like many of these stories do, it began with a child chasing an Olympic dream. I was 13 years old and beginning to skate competitively in figure skating. I was thrilled to start working with Richard Callahan who was the area's top coach and later became one of the most successful coaches of World and Olympic Champions.

Richard took an immediate liking to me, spending hours in his office listening to me talk about my hopes, dreams and challenges and offering the advice of an older mentor.

Years later, I realized this was part of a grooming process that resulted in sexual abuse that began when I was 15 and lasted into my early 20's.

During that time, we achieved considerable professional success. As a skater I was a member of Team USA. Together we coached some of the most prominent figures in our sport, including gold medalist Tara Lipinski.

Like many survivors of child sexual abuse, I had a deep personal connection and an undying loyalty to my abuser. It took years of soul searching and self-loathing plus the support of my wife and family before I fully recognized what he had done and mustered the courage to come forward and report it.

When I did, I was treated with the same disdain, disrespect and disbelief by the US Figure Skating Association as many of the Larry Nassar victims who tried to report him to USA Gymnastics or Michigan State University.

My character and motives were attacked on the pages of the New York Times by my abuser.

Several other skaters came forward to publicly report allegations of sexual misconduct by Callaghan.

The US Figure Skating Association took no action against him, claiming that I had waited too long to report him. The rule at the time was I had a maximum of 60 days to report. They refused to even conduct an investigation and he was allowed to continue coaching. I went on with my life and said nothing for twenty more years.

In January of this year something extraordinary happened. Hundreds of brave young women got up publicly in Michigan courtrooms and gave heart wrenching testimony of the abuse they suffered at the hands of an Olympic team doctor.

Olympic medalists including Jamie Dantzscher and Jordyn Wieber revealed a pattern of disbelief and disrespect by their Olympic governing body, USA Gymnastics that was so similar to what I experienced from US Figure Skating that it made the hair stand up on the back of my neck.

These brave women gave me the courage to speak out again and I want to publicly thank them for it today,

I contacted the US Center for Safe Sport two months ago. They promptly opened an investigation and suspended Richard Callahan from coaching. It is my hope that he will be banned for life.

The US Olympic Committee and its governing bodies are chartered by our federal government and this committee has oversight authority. I respectfully ask you to find out why the USOC did nothing for decades while reports of child sexual abuse

in many Olympic sports were ignored. Who was responsible for this tragedy and how will they be held accountable?

I love my sport and the Olympic movement. I still coach kids that have the Olympic dream some of whom achieve it. Every child in every sport needs to know that the adults in charge have a duty to keep them safe. If they see or experience abuse they must be assured that they will be believed, and we will take action.

The Olympic Creed teaches us, “The important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle...”

No child should ever have to sacrifice his or her innocence as part of their struggle to represent our nation in the Olympics.

Thank you for your leadership and concern.