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SCHAKOWSKY: NCAA PROPOSALS DON'T GO FAR ENOUGH TO END CULTURE THAT TOLERATES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND TO CURB RECRUITING VIOLATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today said that while she is "pleased that the NCAA is working toward reform on issues surrounding recruiting trips and the academic performance of student-athletes," she is, however, "concerned that some of the new proposals do not go far enough" to end the culture that tolerates violence against women and to curb recruiting violations.

Below is Schakowsky's prepared statement from today's hearing in the Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection Subcommittee:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing today to give us the opportunity to follow up on issues related to NCAA recruiting policies and also to learn more about academic reform proposals as they relate to Division I student-athletes. I would like to thank our witnesses for being here today to help shed some light on those issues.

We talked in the previous hearing on the NCAA about a problem with the culture in our top university athletic programs -a culture where alcohol and drugs are commonplace; a culture where abysmal graduation rates are the norm rather than the exception; a culture that tolerates violence against women. I am pleased that the NCAA recognizes that there is a problem and is working toward reform on issues surrounding recruiting trips and the academic performance of student-athletes. However, I am concerned that some of the new proposals do not go far enough. For example, I am concerned that the proposed NCAA recruiting rules still fail to set standards regarding alcohol use and unsupervised entertainment of recruits and, instead, leave it up to individual institutions to make those rules. Before the final rules are approved, I hope that those issues will be revisited and standards adopted that really make the point that we tolerate nothing less than the best behavior from our student-athletes, just as we expect them from all students.

Furthermore, I was alarmed to learn about the graduation rates of some of our elite student-athletes. I know we all agree that it is unacceptable when only 32% of the men's teams participating in the NCAA basketball tournament this year managed to graduate at

least 50% of their players within six years of their initial enrollment. I was shocked to learn that four teams failed to graduate a single player in four years. Statistics like these demand bold steps and comprehensive reform that truly holds school presidents, coaches, and institutions accountable for the education they are providing - or failing to provide - student-athletes.

I am eager to hear more from Mr. Renfro about the NCAA's proposed academic reforms. I also look forward to hearing from Dr. Friday of the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, a group that is committed to reforming college sports into a system with integrity and accountability. It's not just about making new rules that dictate what type of planes recruits can fly in or creating formulas that simply quantify academic progress rates. While those details are important, it's also important that we remind ourselves about the real goal of reform - transforming college sports into a culture that fosters healthy and fun athletic competition while remaining focused on the academic success of student-athletes and their development into honest and respectful adults. Thank you.