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**SCHAKOWSKY QUESTIONS CULTURE
AT TOP UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC
PROGRAMS THAT TOLERATES
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today expressed concern about "the culture in our top university athletic programs - and indeed a culture that persists throughout the nation - that tolerates such violence against women."

□ The Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection Subcommittee held a hearing on college sports recruiting, where the President of the University of Colorado testified.□ Seven women have accused Colorado football players or recruits of sexual assault since 1997, and a female former placekicker testified that she was raped.

Schakowsky, who is the ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee, delivered the following opening statement during today's hearing:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing.□ And thank you to all the witnesses for agreeing to testify today.□ I especially want to thank Mr. Osborne for speaking with us today.□ I think it's important that we examine what really happens when our young men are recruited for sports programs at Division I schools.□ It's important that rules and structures are in place to prevent the types of occurrences on recruiting trips that we have been reading about so frequently in the news these days, particularly involving alcohol, drug use, and violence against women.□□

I believe it is important that administrators at all schools involved, as well as NCAA officials, take all allegations seriously and put forth concerted efforts to truly change what seems to have become common practice in the business of student-athlete recruitment.□□

We've heard a lot about the University of Colorado.□ Obviously, parties that involve sex and alcohol to lure recruits and end in sexual assault are intolerable.□ We know that Colorado University has a history of problems with its recruiting practices, and allegations that recruits and players at Colorado University have assaulted women are

not new. I know the University has taken some steps to investigate these situations and to reform its recruiting rules. These are good first steps. However, I am concerned that it took a great deal of media attention to spur recent actions. I hope this will not be the end of the story and that further proactive measures will be taken to truly reform the culture of athletics and recruiting at that school.

I am eager to hear from Colorado's President, Elizabeth Hoffman, about how the school plans to prevent such misconduct and sexual violence in the future and deal with problems in a more effective way when they do arise. I hope that Colorado University will act in such a way that it does become a model program. As a mother who sent my children to the University of Colorado, I want to say that the remarks Coach Barnett made were absolutely unacceptable. If I were in charge at the University, he would have been fired.

The University of Colorado is not the only school caught up in scandal. A quick look at the headlines from the last couple of years reveals that the University of Iowa, the University of Kentucky, the University of Alabama, the University of Georgia, and the University of Minnesota, to name a few, have all been in the headlines as a result of allegations of misbehavior and alleged sexual violence related to recruiting practices and recruiting trips.

I am concerned about the culture in our top university athletic programs - and indeed a culture that persists throughout the nation - that tolerates such violence against women. This hearing today is very timely, as Lifetime Television and a host of national domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy organizations are on the Hill hosting "Stop Violence Against Women Week" in order to raise awareness of the issue. Nearly one in six women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime, and teens and college-age women have a higher risk of being sexually assaulted than women in other age groups. This briefing is entitled, "Are student athletes being protected?" I would like to add, are the female students and other women who are in contact with such athletic programs being protected? It saddens and angers me that there is no shortage of stories we could talk about today involving sexual assault and student-athletes.

I am eager to hear Mr. McPherson's perspectives on this issue. As a former college and professional football player and now as someone who has dedicated his career to ending a culture of violence against women in sports, he brings a unique and valuable perspective to the Subcommittee. I am also eager to hear from Mr. Berst about what the NCAA plans to do to address what I see as one of the root problems - an athletic culture that tolerates and perpetuates the degradation and objectification of women. I know the NCAA has many rules and regulations regarding the logistics of recruiting programs, and I am encouraged by that. I am hopeful that the new NCAA Task Force on Recruiting will go beyond logistics and put in place standards for our student-athletes that we can all be proud of.

Finally, academics should not be left behind in this debate. It is critical to remember that we're talking about student - athletes. I am looking forward to hearing from Mr.

Williams about the example of Vanderbilt University and what they've done to lessen the culture of competitiveness and bring the focus back on academics.