



The Honourable Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Sport and Science
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Duncan,

As athletes within the Canadian sport system, we feel compelled to write directly to you to voice our concerns regarding the future of safe sport in Canada. We find it concerning that National Sporting Organizations (NSOs) are left to self-regulate complaints pertaining to safety, harassment and abuse. Regardless of the intentions of the NSO, the current system of NSO led investigations contain conflicts of interest that either directly bias the process or create the perception of bias. This has contributed to a strong sense of mistrust from athletes and a fear of reprisal that prevents adequate disclosure and reporting.

As athletes, we believe that an independent body is needed to review these complaints. This body must be external to the NSO and is fundamental to the implementation of many of the recommendations outlined in the *Report Concerning Independent Review of Coaching Culture for Wrestling Canada Lutte*, prepared by David Bennett. Further to this, an independent body would demonstrate the federal government's support of Safe Sport and would begin the process of restoring athletes' trust in their governing bodies. As athletes, we believe NSOs should be focusing their resources on managing and administering high-performance sport programs within Canada and should not self-regulate these important safety issues.

The need for an independent third party to review complaints of this nature extends beyond Wrestling Canada Lutte. Issues of safety are prevalent in all sports. Adequate disclosure of safety concerns is a systemic problem that requires a systemic solution. A central, independent body could be utilized by all Canadian NSOs, which could result in cost savings and consistency in how safety issues are addressed. This request is in the best interest of Canadian athletes and NSOs.

We implore the federal government to be a leader in safe sport by providing the structure and resources necessary to rebuild trust in our system.

Yours in Sport,

Athletes of Wrestling Canada Lutte

