

U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Senator Richard G. Lugar
Opening Statement for
Hearing on the International Convention Against Doping in Sport
May 22, 2008

I join the Chairman in welcoming our witnesses to this hearing on the International Convention Against Doping in Sport. The Convention was negotiated with significant U.S. participation, and thus far, 85 nations have ratified it. The Foreign Relations Committee has been called on to evaluate this treaty and the impact of U.S. ratification on international and American anti-doping efforts.

The United States is passionate about athletics at every level, from the most elite professionals to our sons and daughters playing on school teams. We are hopeful that athletic competition is fair, and even more importantly, safe. Performance enhancing drugs undercut fair competition and introduce a destructive element into endeavors that should be promoting good health and physical fitness. Athletes who use steroids or other drugs are placing their own health at serious risk and setting a damaging example for the millions of younger athletes who look up to them.

For many young people, participation in sports is a fundamental element of personal expression, social status, and self-worth. In some cases, sports are a pathway to college and other means of personal advancement. In this context, the temptation of drugs that offer the prospect of improved performance can be very powerful – particularly when the safety and efficacy of that temptation seems to be validated by elite athletes. The Office of National Drug Control Policy found in 2006 that 1.6 percent of eighth grade students and 2.7 percent of twelfth grade students reported using steroids at least once.

The Convention before us is not a panacea for this problem. Rather, it seeks to improve international coordination in preventing and responding to doping in sports. It requires commitments by parties to collaborate on research, education and rules related to anti-doping efforts.

The Executive Branch has determined that U.S. laws and practices are already consistent with the Convention. Thus, no further implementing legislation would be necessary for the United States to become a party.

I look forward to this opportunity to study the Convention in greater depth and hear the testimony of our witnesses about why it is needed and how it might be beneficial to U.S. interests.

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