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Please provide 15 hard copies of testimony along with a PDF to Barbara Moore in room 419-E  
Please submit all testimony no later than 10:00 AM the day before the scheduled meeting

Bill # SB 317

*Please note nomenclature (HB, SB, SCR, etc.)*

Date of Testimony 03/23/23

*(MM/DD/YY)*

Category:

*Please select one*

- Proponent  
 Opponent  
 Neutral

Conferee

Kim

*First name*

Bergman

*Last Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Organization represented and title, if any*

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*(Speaking w/15 hard copies & a PDF)*  
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Hello my name is Kim Bergman and I am a survivor of child sexual abuse. I was 12 years old when my gymnastics coach, David Byrd, began abusing me. Over the years I have learned that I was not his first victim or his last. David Byrd had a reputation in the gymnastics community for inappropriate behavior. Unfortunately, those rumors went ignored and David was granted unlimited access to children.

My coach targeted me because I was vulnerable. I had difficulties going on at home and he began grooming me for his own pleasure. He started simple, like touching my chest and bottom in order to put my body in the right shape for gymnastics, something that can be easily accomplished without touching private areas. At first I assumed the touching was normal, but I soon started to feel that something was wrong.

That summer, my team traveled to Bart Conner's Gymnastics Camp. My memories of that camp include the famous gymnast Nadia Comăneci teaching me my back walkover on beam and being sexually assaulted. One night my teammates, coaches, and I went to the hotel pool. David was tossing kids into the air and everyone was having a great time. No one seemed to notice David putting his hands inside my swimsuit or see him grab my hand to make me touch his erect penis. Later that night we were all in the hotel room watching TV together. David gave me a massage on the bed in the room with my teammates and other chaperones present. He would put his hands inside my shirt to touch my breasts, undetected by anyone else. I froze. I was terrified. I finally got up and sat behind David to try to get away from his touch. Instead David turned and glared at me and asked in a way that I will never forget, "Why did you move?" He then reached his hand behind him between my legs to continue touching me. I was trapped.

3 years later I completed a forensic interview with the police and child protective services after my mom found a letter that I had written detailing my abuse. Unfortunately, the DA did not press charges, despite the abuse being substantiated by DCF.

My abuse was one small part of a culture of abuse within USA Gymnastics. In 2016, the biggest scandal of child sexual abuse in sports history began to unfold when the world learned of the horrors of Doctor Larry Nassar and his abuse of athletes as the team doctor for USA Gymnastics. It was also discovered that USAG had a history of dismissing allegations of child sexual abuse within the sport, and had a drawer full of these allegations that were never investigated.

In 2018, a friend told me about a women's advocacy organization that was looking to help women who had been sexually abused in gymnastics. The organization referred me to my attorney, who represented me as K.B. Doe 17 in the class action lawsuit against USA Gymnastics and the US Olympic Committee. My attorney helped me to

work through my abuse and understand that change was needed to make sure that what happened to me would never happen to another child.

I learned that while lawsuits help compensate victims for damages, they more importantly force organizations to create necessary changes for the future. During this time, federal legislation was enacted to help keep athletes safe from sexual abuse and the national Safe Sport organization was created. As a current gymnastics coach, I have seen the steps that USA Gymnastics has taken to make gymnastics a safer place for children and I believe these changes were a direct result of the lawsuit filed against them.

Joining the lawsuit helped me to find my voice and become a voice for others. The day I received my award letter was the first time that I felt like I truly mattered, and that someone thought that what happened to me was actually worth something. I was proud that my story helped create change that would protect future children. And for me, that was worth more than any financial settlement could ever give me.

*Kim Bergman, LMSW*