TOM DAVIS, VIRGINIA,
CHAIRMAN

CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, CONNECTICUT
DAN BURTON, INDIANA
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, FLORIDA
JOHN M. McHUGH, NEW YORK
JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA
GIL GUTKNECHT, MINNESOTA
MARK E. SOUDER, INDIANA
STEVEN C. LATOURETTE, OHIO
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, PENNSYLVANIA
CHRIS CANNON, UTAH
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE
CANDICE MILLER, MICHIGAN
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO
DARRELL ISSA, CALIFORNIA
VIRGINIA BROWN-WAITE, FLORIDA
JON C. PORTER, NEVADA
KENNY MARCHANT, TEXAS
LYNN A. WESTMORELAND, GEORGIA
PATRICK T. McHENRY, NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLES W. DENT, PENNSYLVANIA
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515–6143

MAJORITY (202) 225–5074
FACSIMILE (202) 225–3974
MINORITY (202) 225–5051
TTY (202) 225–6852

http://reform.house.gov

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA,
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

TOM LANTOS, CALIFORNIA
MAJOR R. OWENS, NEW YORK
EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK
PAUL E. KANJORSKI, PENNSYLVANIA
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, OHIO
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS
WM. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND
LINDA T. SANCHEZ, CALIFORNIA
C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER,
MARYLAND
BRIAN HIGGINS, NEW YORK
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT,
INDEPENDENT

February 24, 2005

The Honorable Tom Davis
Chairman
Committee on Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In the movie *Field of Dreams*, Terrence Mann, a writer, explains the unique role baseball has had in American life:

> The one constant through all the years . . . has been baseball. America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It's been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt, and erased again. But baseball has marked the time . . . this game is part of our past. It reminds us of all that once was good, and that could be again.

This is not a good time, however, for baseball. The steroid scandal that has unfolded over the last several years calls into question the fundamental integrity of the game. And it raises serious health implications for millions of American teenagers who look to professional athletes as role models.

Jose Canseco's allegations about steroid use by Mark McGwire and other baseball players have received enormous media attention. Many of the individuals have denied the accusations. Mr. Canseco insists his information is accurate. Despite the baseball commissioner's statement that his goal is to have "zero tolerance regarding steroids," Major League Baseball has announced it will not investigate Mr. Canseco's allegations.

There is a simple way to find the truth in this matter. Our Committee should hold a hearing with Mr. Canseco, Mr. McGwire, and others and have them testify under oath. This would be an opportunity to find out what really happened and to get to the bottom of this growing scandal.

Congressional hearings in the 1950s examined allegations of cheating in television quiz shows. The oversight provided by these hearings exposed wrongdoing and forced the networks

to change their practices. In the same way, an independent congressional investigation is needed to remove the cloud now hanging over baseball. As former baseball commissioner Fay Vincent reminded us in a recent *Washington Post* column, "sunlight is the best of disinfectants."

We should also hear from representatives from Major League Baseball and the players' union to examine what they plan to do to stop the use of dangerous drugs by pro baseball players. Major League Baseball announced a new policy on steroid testing last month. But this new policy has been criticized by anti-doping experts. It is not as strict as the policy covering the minor league players and it does not include an across-the-board ban on stimulants. We should examine what baseball needs to do to halt the use of steroids and other drugs once and for all.

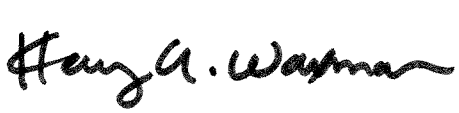
Performance enhancing drugs are a growing public health problem. Steroid use can cause liver damage and even cancer. The stimulant ephedrine is believed to have killed Baltimore Oriole pitcher Steve Bechler. If we ignore the allegations of rampant drug use in major league baseball, we are sending the wrong message to the millions of youth who emulate professional athletes. As President Bush remarked in his State of the Union Address last year:

> To help children make right choices, they need good examples. Athletics play such an important role in our society, but, unfortunately, some in professional sports are not setting much of an example. The use of performance-enhancing drugs like steroids in baseball, football, and other sports is dangerous, and it sends the wrong message — that there are shortcuts to accomplishment, and that performance is more important than character.

Given our Committee's broad oversight powers, we can play an important role in restoring baseball's luster and keeping sports at all levels clean of these dangerous drugs.

I appreciate your willingness to consider this request.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member