STATEMENT OF CURT SCHILLING

Chairman Davis, Congressman Waxman, members of the committee, and other distinguished guests and invitees:

Nearly two weeks ago I had the extreme honor of standing on the west lawn of the White House, alongside my teammates and other members of the Boston Red Sox World Championship team, to accept the congratulations of President Bush, and Vice President Cheney. Following that, our team made a visit to Walter Reed Hospital here in Washington D.C. During that visit, my teammates and I had the extreme honor of meeting and visiting with the heroic men and women serving in this great country's armed forces. As the son of a man who served almost 2 decades in the United States Army as a member of the 101st Airborne Division, with a brother in law who served in Vietnam, a cousin that served in the US Navy aboard the USS Carl Vincent, and another cousin who recently finished his service in the United States army as a member of the Army Rangers, Green Berets and finally the Delta Force, I think that visit, with absolutely no disrespect to our esteemed President and Vice President, was the highlight of many of our trips, and some of our lives. I believe that visit made my teammates and I aware of how fortunate we were to live in this country and how fortunate we were to be able to bring some joy that afternoon to those courageous service people, just because we were major league baseball players.

Being a professional baseball player has put me in a position to try to bring awareness to certain issues and causes that affect so many people in our great county. For example, my notoriety as a player has enabled me to bring an increase in awareness to the terrible disease known as ALS which afflicts some 30,000 Americans at any one time, and to act as an advocate to try to find a cure for the disease. My position as a player, along with the dedication of my wife Shonda, a cancer survivor, has enabled the two of us to bring awareness to the terrible problem that is skin cancer or melanoma. Our foundation tries to educate young Americans of the dangers of exposure to the sun. In fact, at this moment, a bill has passed the Arizona Senate and is awaiting a vote by the House of Representatives that would mandate that all children be taught sun safety in school, the first such mandate anywhere in the United States.

My hope is that this hearing results in an increased awareness of steroids and their inherent danger to America's youth. I understand from the invitation I received to appear before this Committee that my presence has been requested because I have been outspoken on this issue. I am honored to be a co-chairman on an advisory committee tasked with putting together recommendations on how to prevent steroid usage among young people. I recognize that professional athletes are role models for many of the youth of this country. Most athletes take that role very seriously and I hope through my appearance here that I am conveying my seriousness and understanding of this issue. While I don't profess to have the medical expertise to adequately describe the dangers of steroid use, I do believe I have the expertise to comment on whether steroids are necessary to excel in athletics. I think it is critical to convey to the youth who desire to excel in sports that steroids are not the answer, that steroids are not necessary in order to excel in any athletic event and that success is achieved through hard work, dedication and perseverance.

I also hope that by being here, I can raise a level of awareness on several other fronts. First, I hope the Committee recognizes the danger of possibly glorifying the so called author scheduled to testify today or by indirectly assisting him to sell more books through his claim that what he is doing is somehow good for this country or the game of baseball. A book which devotes hundreds of pages to glorifying steroid usage and which contends that steroid usage is justified and will be the norm in this country in several years is a disgrace, was written irresponsibly and sends exactly the opposite message that needs to be sent to kids. The allegations made in that book, the attempts to smear the names of players, both past and present, having been made by one who for years vehemently denied steroid use, should be seen for what they are, an attempt to make money at the expense of others. I hope we come out of this proceeding aware of what we are dealing with when we talk about that so called author and that we not create a buzz that results in young athletes buying the book and being misled on the issues and dangers of steroids.

I must also tell you, members of the committee, that I hope that a result of this hearing there is a better awareness of the steroid program recently implemented by Major League Baseball and its Players Association. That program, though certainly not perfect, and I dare say there is no such thing as a perfect testing program, is a substantial step in the right direction that appears, from initial statistics, to be having the desired effect—that is removing steroids from baseball. Statistics have shown that from 2003 to 2004 the number of players using steroids in the major leagues has gone from 5-7% to 1.7%. In fact, in yesterday's New York Times it was reported that there were 96 positive tests during the 2003 testing period, and in 2004 that number saw a dramatic decrease as only 12 players tested positive. I see that as progress, I see that as a positive. It troubles me when I hear the program being identified as a joke, a travesty and a program not designed to rid baseball of steroids. I think those numbers show this to be a meaningful program, one that is working, and steroid usage is dropping.

I find solace in the fact that a man who I hold in the highest regard, Senator John McCain, an American war hero, a man of the highest moral standards and integrity, indicated his satisfaction that the league and its players had made a meaningful step in dealing with the steroid problem. Senator McCain had a problem with baseball and its earlier steroid program. He voiced that problem and both the league and the players association listened and took action. The Players Association, in an unprecedented move, re-opened the Collective Bargaining agreement for the sole purpose of strengthening the drug testing procedures, and its penalties. You may view the reopening of the agreement as a non-issue, or as one of minimal consequences, we don't.

It appears that the main complaint about the current program revolves around the current penalties for being caught, or failing a test. It is my view as a 19-year veteran of professional baseball that there will be no system of suspensions or discipline that can be implemented that will stand up to, or match, the agreement made by the players that positive test results will be made public, subjecting the player to public humiliation and labeling as a steroid user or cheater. Given the intense media coverage that now permeates professional sports, there is no doubt in my mind that any player who is caught after this program has been implemented, will for all intents and purposes have his career blacklisted, forever. When a player's suspension is over, he

may be able to lose the label of a player who is under suspension, but I am convinced he will never lose the label of a steroid user.

Members of the Committee, do I believe steroids are being used by Major League Baseball players? Yes. Past and present testing says as much. Do I believe we should continue to test and monitor steroid usage in Major League Baseball? Absolutely. In fact in that regard I believe the message has been heard by players, and that serious, positive, forward thinking steps have been taken on this issue. I urge the Committee to focus its efforts in that direction as well and not to dwell on what may have occurred in the past.

I also urge the committee to not make this process just about baseball. Steroids and supplement usage appears to be not a "baseball" problem, but a society problem. Everywhere you look, we are bombarded by advertising of supplements and feel good medications. I urge you to evaluate the way in which these products are manufactured, and more importantly, the way in which they are marketed. If we are going to send a message to the young athlete that steroid use is bad, and that steroids are not necessary to achieve success, you cannot allow that message to be drowned out by the manufacturer's advertising to the contrary. If the Government thought enough of the youth of this country to rally against the tobacco industry and its advertising to our youth, why should the supplement industry be any different?

I cannot conclude my statement without expressing my admiration to the Hootons and the Garibaldis for appearing here today and I extend my deepest sympathy to each of them for their loss. As a father of four children, I cannot begin to imagine the pain they must be suffering. Maybe their loss will result in an awareness of the tragedy that follows steroid use.

Thank you for your attention.