STATEMENT OF MR. SAMMY SOSA
To The House Committee On Government Reform
March 17, 2005

Good afternoon members of the Committee. I understand that people have said that steroids are a big problem in professional baseball and that it is trickling down to our kids. I am here to offer my testimony in the hope that it will assist the Committee in remedying this problem.

I grew up in San Pedro in the Dominican Republic with 4 brothers and 2 sisters. My father passed away when I was seven years old. We sold oranges and shined shoes to get by. Early on I displayed a talent for baseball and when I was 16 I left home and signed with the Texas Rangers.

I played in the Minor Leagues for 4 years before I played my first Major League game when I was 20 years old. Playing at that level is very difficult, especially for someone as young as I was. I had to fight for everything, and that meant working out harder than the next guy, lifting a few more reps than the last guy. It meant spending more time in the batting cages and less time in the clubs.

Everything I have heard about steroids and human growth hormones is that they are very bad for you, even lethal. I would never put anything dangerous like that in my body. Nor would I encourage other people to use illegal performance enhancing drugs.

To be clear, I have never taken illegal performance enhancing drugs. I have never injected myself or had anyone inject me with anything. I have not broken the laws of the United States or the laws of the Dominican Republic. I have been tested as recently as 2004 and I am clean.

I support testing professional athletes for illegal performance enhancing drugs. Because rigorous testing is new to baseball, the initial reaction of many players was to bristle at the perceived invasion of privacy. But if more testing is what it takes to help clean up the sport, I am behind it. In light of recent scandals and serious public health problems, we players need to commit to doing whatever it takes to regain our credibility as athletes and members of the community.

I do a lot of charity work with young people and I am genuinely committed to their welfare. I'm willing to work with you and the Congress as a whole to educate kids and young athletes about these serious issues. Education of course starts at home, but we baseball players can help by speaking out against the use of illegal performance enhancing drugs. To the extent that I can help in these efforts, I am anxious to do so.