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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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NATIONAL SECURITY

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION
TASK FORCE
Vice Chair

November 14, 2014

Mike Helton
President, NASCAR
1801 West International Speed Boulevard
Daytona Beach, Florida 32114

Tony Stewart and Gene Haas
Co-owners, Stewart-Haas Racing
6001 Haas Way,
Kannapolis, NC 28081

Dear Mr. Helton, Mr. Stewart, and Mr. Haas:

Each year, domestic violence causes more injuries to women than auto accidents, rapes, and muggings combined. On average, 24 Americans each minute are victims of physical violence by an intimate partner. High-profile news stories have shown that major sports leagues like the National Football League (NFL) have stood by or failed to adequately respond when these violent crimes are committed by their players. Unfortunately, National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing's (NASCAR) and Stewart-Haas Racing's response to Patricia Driscoll's allegations of domestic violence against Kurt Busch seem to indicate that NASCAR's responses to these crimes are also off track.

The charges are horrifying. Court documents allege Mr. Busch verbally and physically abused Ms. Driscoll in his motorhome at Dover International Speedway, smashing her head against a wall three times. Dover police are investigating the incident, and press statements from NASCAR chief communications officer Brett Jewkes indicate NASCAR is also conducting its own investigation. But despite the severity of the criminal allegations against Mr. Busch, I am disappointed to see that NASCAR and Stewart-Haas Racing have not taken any action.

Your response to these serious allegations has been totally inadequate. Your decision to let Mr. Busch continue to drive is inconsistent with previous disciplinary actions taken for lesser offenses, and it sends a clear signal to drivers that owners do not take these violent actions seriously. As you are aware, this is not the first time that Mr. Busch's anger management issues have been brought to NASCAR's attention. He and Mr. Penske agreed to end his relationship with Penske Racing after Mr. Busch profanely yelled at an ESPN reporter in 2011. It's not even the first time that Mr. Busch has demonstrated problems at Dover: he was suspended after threatening a reporter there in June 2012.

How is it that NASCAR can take actions when a reporter is threatened, and not when a woman is physically assaulted? It seems unconscionable that a threat would be treated more gravely than an assault. It calls into question the enforcement policies exercised by NASCAR and whether your code of conduct has a double standard. You only punish misconduct caught on camera. Unfortunately NASCAR was equally passive when Sprint Cup driver Travis Kvapil was accused of pulling his wife by her hair into a bedroom and striking her head when she tried to pull away. Neither NASCAR nor BK Racing stopped Mr. Kvapil from driving, though they did remove the domestic violence awareness ribbon from his car.

NASCAR and Stewart-Haas Racing should not wait until the investigation is complete to act. I urge you to suspend Mr. Busch from this weekend's Championship and adopt a policy going forward in all domestic violence cases to suspend drivers until criminal proceedings end or there is a clear lack of evidence. Please also provide my office with an update on your investigation, including information about who is conducting the investigation, and a history of sanctions levied by NASCAR and racing teams for domestic violence incidents brought to your attention over the last five years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jackie Speier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress