

I am emailing you about the University of Minnesota's decision to drop varsity sports, specifically men's gymnastics. My name is Thomas Glielmi, I am a former coach at the U. I am currently the head coach for the men's gymnastics team at Stanford University, and was 2021 Olympic Head Coach for the USA. I started my collegiate coaching career in 1998 at the U. My first experience as an Olympic Coach was at the 2000 Olympic Games coaching University of Minnesota gymnast John Roethlisberger.

I am writing to support the public hearing your committee has scheduled for Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 1 pm to hear testimony regarding the three dropped sports at the University of Minnesota. I have been outraged and dumbfounded since the decision to drop these sports was first proposed by Athletic Director Mark Coyle at the 9/11/20 U of M Board of Regents meeting.

It appears to me AD Coyle had an agenda to simply run the department like a business cutting where the money coming in is limited, and pushing to put more money into programs that have a better potential return. He made no consideration of the University of Minnesota's mission, nor any consideration for what an educational institution should be striving to do – that being to expand opportunities.

My family in Minnesota and I are frustrated with the direction of the athletic department at the U. We have loved our sporting experiences at the U: being season ticket holders for Gopher hockey, watching my nephews wrestle in tournaments at Williams Arena, going to a football game or cheering on the men's gymnastics team. Being from a large family – I have 10 siblings, 24 nephews and nieces -- we have always encouraged each other in any of our endeavors, whether it be academia, sports (gymnastics, tennis, swimming, wrestling, baseball, softball, football), music, art, or business. And we feel very fortunate to have been able to experience these opportunities through our educational institutions.

One of the things I've respected most about Minnesota is its willingness to invest in education and opportunities for young people. The hearing on February 15 is extremely important to me, please do not cancel it as I have heard that some are trying to get the hearing canceled.

I plan to attend this hybrid hearing via zoom. I and my family are following very closely what comes next, especially any positive movement toward transparency of the use of taxpayer money for higher education and benefits to student athlete programs (specifically the reinstatement of Men's gymnastics, indoor track, and tennis).

I am hopeful some clarity on the situation will be forthcoming.

Respectfully,
Thomas Glielmi