

**U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell**  
**Floor Speech following the House Passage of the Equal Pay for Team USA Act**  
**December 21, 2022**

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

**Senator Cantwell:** When you watch U.S. athletes compete in the Olympics, and the Paralympics, and in the World Cup, it probably doesn't cross your mind that men and women – who play the same sport – may not get the same travel accommodations, or equal medical care, or still be waiting to be reimbursed for their expenses that they had out of pocket.

In fact, for women athletes, they might not be sure if they're getting a fair shake at all.

It's taken women athletes at the top of their game stepping up and demanding their worth over and over, for women to be taken seriously in sports. I'm talking about the women of USA Hockey in 2017, and the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team in 2019, and many other athletes.

It's been 50 years since Title IX carved out a place for women and girls in sports. But still, women athletes frequently get less. That's why we needed the bipartisan Equal Pay for Team USA Act to build on the promise of Title IX for women competing at the international level.

I'm so happy to say that this Senate bill, S.2333, that already previously passed the Senate, just passed the House tonight, 350 to 59.

I'm happy because we need to make sure that there is equal pay for Team USA. And to make sure that U.S. national teams under the Olympic Committee comply with this act.

It ensures that athletes in the same sport will receive equal pay, benefits, and medical care, travel, and reimbursements expenses – regardless of gender.

It applies to the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, and also to all the national governing bodies which USOPC oversees. Basically, any athlete competing for Team USA on a world stage.

It will make sure that they get and receive equal compensation to their fellow male athletes in their sports.

I want to thank my colleague Senator Capito for cosponsoring this legislation and helping to advocate for it for the last year and half and continuing to fight to make sure that we got this implemented into law.

This law requires detailed reports from the USOPC, and national governing bodies – like U.S. Soccer, or U.S. Squash, or USA Volleyball – to be sent to Congress each year so we can help make sure that these women athletes get equal pay.

We want to get to the root of any issues in the future that hold anyone back from making sure that this law is implemented.

I also want to thank heroes like Megan Rapinoe and Alex Morgan who brought that case against U.S. Soccer. U.S. Women's Soccer led the charge after winning the World Cup and making it clear to everyone that women athletes deserve equal pay.

It took a lot of hard work to make sure that this bill got into law.

And I also want to thank my colleagues from the Committee who helped pass this legislation and Senators Klobuchar and Lummis who also joined Senator Capito and I in advocating for this legislation.

So, while I wish tonight there were solutions to the inequities that exist in professional leagues – like the WNBA and the National Women's Soccer League – this is still a huge, important step towards the economic empowerment of women athletes.

I also want to mention work of my staff, Lucy Koch from the Commerce Committee and many others on Senator Klobuchar's staff, and on the Commerce Committee who helped this legislation over the goal line.

This is a strong message to female athletes, not just in the State of Washington, but across the United States: you deserve – and now you will have – equal pay.

And this is a win for Team USA!