



April 14, 2023

Re: Bill H.2215 (K. Khan) and Bill S.1465 (M. Rush), *An Act protecting children from harmful diet pills and muscle-building supplements*

Dear Honorable Lawmakers of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts House and Senate:

We are a group of professional figure skating coaches and officials from The Skating Club of Boston in Norwood, Massachusetts. A world-renowned facility and skating club known for its long lineage of success, former members include national, world, and Olympic champions. The Skating Club is truly comprehensive, offering all levels and disciplines of skating. The facility also proudly features the Marilyn P. Kasputys Branch of the Micheli Center for Sports Injury Prevention, which under Boston Children's Hospital, provides ground-breaking approaches to both injury prevention and strength-and-conditioning plans.

A Team USA figure skater who trains in both The Skating Club of Boston and The Micheli Center has recently brought to our attention the proposed **H.2215/S.1465**, "An Act protecting children from diet pills and muscle-building supplements," sponsored by Senator Michael Rush and Representative Kay Khan. As you know, Senator Rush represents the Town of Norwood in which the Club is now located.

As New England's premiere skating destination, both the physical and mental health of its youth population is of the utmost importance, and prioritizing their wellbeing is something we continue to strive for each and every day. Recently informed of the plethora of research provided by STRIPED, we strongly condemn the use of diet pills and muscle-building supplements for children in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The use of these products is especially harmful in the sport of figure skating, which unfortunately already places crippling pressures on both body image and weight due to the aesthetic-based nature of the sport. Many figure skaters have come forward and shared their struggles with disordered eating, including two-time national champion and Olympic bronze medalist, Gracie Gold, who has bravely and candidly spoken about her experience with anorexia as well as other mental health comorbidities. These products only exacerbate these already present issues further in a sport where unhealthy weight-loss practices and unrealistic body standards and ideals are present. As evidence from STRIPED suggests, diet pill users were four to six times more likely to be diagnosed with an eating disorder within several years of starting to use these products compared to non-users, highlighting the extent to which these harmful substances contribute to eating disorder pathogenesis.

Other aspects of these products, such as being laced with dangerous pesticides and pharmaceuticals is alarming to say the least, and as professionals at a prominent sports club in Massachusetts, we do not want anyone to consume these products - let alone children. In fact, a vast number of the club's members are children, many of whom can easily fall prey to the deceptiveness of the supplement manufacturing industry. Because these products are underregulated by the FDA and companies can make bold claims about alleged 'results,' minors can be allured into making this easy over-the-counter purchase without knowing the harmful nature and potential adverse health complications.

The dangers and toxicities of these products are well documented, and on behalf of the young, developing athletes here, we pledge **support of H.2215/S.1465**, an Act to protect children from dietary supplements for weight loss and muscle building and over-the-counter (OTC) diet pills. The severity of this issue crosses over the line of 'faulty advertising,' negatively impacting the lives of our skaters in several different manners. As figure skating professionals with years of experience, we feel compelled beyond words to protect children and to educate the general population on the dangers of these products and why they should truly be 'out of kids' hands.' The Skating Club of Boston strives to welcome its skaters into the safest and healthiest environment where they can thrive and reach their full potential. Because of this, we strongly urge you to vote in support of these bills.

We thank you for both your time and your leadership on the increasing urgency of this situation.

Sincerely,

Club Management:

Doug Zeghibe
Executive Director

Katharine Steeger
Director

Jon Jepson
Club Director

Club Coaches:

Matthew Lind
Professional Coach and Choreographer, The Skating Club of Boston
National Singles Technical Specialist, US Figure Skating
Coaches Committee, US Figure Skating
Presenter, SHARP4sports.com
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Suna Murray
1972 US Olympic Team, Ladies
Chair of US Figure Skating Coaches Committee from 2015-2018
National Technical Specialist in Singles, US Figure Skating

Matt Savoie
2006 U.S. Olympian
Former International Skating Union (ISU) Singles and Pairs Technical Committee Member (2006-2010)

Elin Schran
Former Professional Skater, Dorothy Hamill's Ice Capades and Charles Schulz's Santa Rosa Holiday Show
Founder and Director, Joy Skate Productions
Co-founder, Frozen Frog Productions, The Boston Common Frog Pond
Founder, Boston Ice Theatre

Rebecca Stump
Coaching Director, The Skating Club of Boston
Certified Program Director, US Figure Skating

Susan Hamel

Former Ballet Skater for Holiday On Ice, International Arena Production, Holland
Master Group Instructor Rating

Jimmy Morgan

Former National and International level pairs skater
Theatre On Ice Coach

Sean Marshinski

National Development Team Coach, US Figure Skating

Garrett Lucash

Professional Skater's Association (PSA) Sport Science Committee Chair
2005 United States National Champion, Pairs
National Development Team Coach, US Figure Skating

Ariel Fay Gagnon

Off-ice Strength and Conditioning Specialist, The Micheli Center, Boston Children's Hospital
Former World Championships Competitor, Pairs
Former Assistant Choreographer for the Skating Club of TMR (Montreal)
Co-choreographer for Ice Chips, The Skating Club of Boston Annual Production

Jun Hong Chen

Former National Competitor
Junior Coach
Pole Harness Specialist

Kate McSwain

Co-CEO and Executive Director of American Ice Theatre
Master Rated Choreographer