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March 31, 2016

Mr. Sunil Gulati
President
United States Soccer Federation
1801 S. Prairie Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60616

Dear Mr. Gulati,

As the U.S. Women's National Team (U.S.W.N.T.) prepares to defend its Olympic gold medal in Rio, I am troubled by the federal complaint filed by five team members charging U.S. Soccer with wage discrimination. Millions of young Americans – girls and boys alike – look up to our soccer players as role models, but too often our athletes are placed on a pedestal solely for their performance on the field. In this case, the women of the U.S.W.N.T. are taking on an even more important task: fighting to correct a fundamental injustice. U.S. Soccer has an opportunity to be a leader on pay equity, to say a day's work for a woman should be worth the same as a day's work for a man. U.S. Soccer should not wait for outside intervention – it should just act.

Already in the United States women make only 79 cents for every dollar paid to men. More than 50 years after the Equal Pay Act was signed into law by President Kennedy, we are still falling far short of full parity. Unfortunately, if the reported statistics are accurate and U.S.W.N.T. members earn as little as 40 percent of what members of the men's national team earn, U.S. Soccer has significant work to do to close an unacceptable gap.

The U.S.W.N.T. is an incredible draw, earned the highest ever English-language television ratings in winning the World Cup last summer, and, in many ways, has been soccer's standard bearer in the United States. The U.S.W.N.T. also generates revenue similar to the men's team. If the team members have the same work requirements, they should earn the same pay.

As the voice of soccer in our country, U.S. Soccer must answer a fundamental question: is women's work worth less than men's? And the answer today, and every day, should be no. When women work as hard, and well – and there's no question the U.S.W.N.T. has done so – they should be entitled to equal pay for equal work.

It should not take a federal complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for U.S. Soccer to do the right thing.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate