

July 30, 2019

Ms. Julie Cromer Peoples, Chair
Attn: Committee on Women's Athletics
The National Collegiate Athletic Association
700 W. Washington Street
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222

Re: STUNT's Petition for Emerging Sport Status

Dear Ms. Cromer Peoples and Committee on Women's Athletics,

Champion Women is aware of the efforts underway by USA Cheer to add STUNT to the NCAA emerging sport list. Their initiative could provide additional opportunities for women to participate and derive the important educational benefits that come with participating in intercollegiate athletics.

Champion Women provides legal advocacy for girls and women in sports. Our organization advocates for equality, educates the public, and represents women and girls in the fight for equality and equal representation in sports.

Champion Women believes in the work of the Committee on Women's Athletics and its Emerging Sport process. The expansion of sports participation opportunities for female student-athletes is needed to continue to improve gender equity in the NCAA and to realize the promise of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. As you know, Title IX's impact on women's athletic participation is one of the country's greatest success stories. Yet, as you are also equally aware, girls and women are still facing pervasive inequalities. According to NCAA reports, females comprise 57% of the college student population but receive only 43.5% of all college athletic participation opportunities. *This is a decrease from 2011, when women received 45% of the athletic participation opportunities.* The addition of STUNT as an emerging sport in the NCAA program could help to close this gap.

STUNT provides comparable student athlete experience as other NCAA sports. It boasts a 36-person roster, 20-person competition team, up to 20 college scholarships, at least 12 competitions throughout the season, and robust regional and national post-season competitive schedules. This is comparable to other men's and women's more established sports. For example, almost all other sports have enough full grant-in-aids to support a full competitive team, plus between 20% to 150% additional athletes for substitutions, injuries, and practice players. A low scholarship allotment/high roster count can prevent a college or university from being able to comply with its obligation to provide the total amount of scholarship funds available to men and women on a

“substantially proportionate” basis.¹ Additionally, a low number of required competitions deprives athletes of their ability to improve and test their skills on par with other, recognized sports, making it more likely that sideline cheerleaders will automatically fill the teams without generating true new opportunities for women. As such, STUNT could provide colleges and universities with an additional way to expand their female sports offering and help improve compliance with Title IX. While it remains to be seen whether other OCR definitional requirements² for a sport are being met until it is active on campuses, having the designated “Emerging Sport” status would advance the process.

We fully support the efforts of USA Cheer to secure NCAA emerging sport status for STUNT and urge the Committee on Women’s Athletics to approve their proposal for formal designation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy Hogshead-Makar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Nancy Hogshead-Makar, J.D.
CEO, Champion Women

¹ Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; A Policy Interpretation; Title IX and Intercollegiate Athletics, 44 Fed. Reg. 71,413, 71,418 (Dec. 11, 1979) available at: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/t9interp.html>

² Champion Women concurs with the definition of a sport for Title IX purposes, as detailed in the OCR’s “Dear Colleague” Letter from Stephanie Monroe, Assistant Sec’y of Educ. for Civil Rights (Sept. 17, 2008) available at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-20080917.html>