



OLYMPIC MEDALIST FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST USA BOBSLED, US OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE FOR REPEATED SEXUAL ABUSE BY TEAM CHIROPRACTOR

Olympic bobsledder alleges years of sexual abuse that was perpetuated by USA Bobsled and USOPC

ESSEX COUNTY, NY – Olympic bobsledder Aja Evans filed a lawsuit against the USA Bobsled and Skeleton Federation, the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC), osteopathic medical provider John Wilhelm, and Pro Chiropractic, alleging nearly a decade of sexual abuse and harassment by Mr. Wilhelm while she was training and competing for the USA Bobsled team. The abuse occurred primarily at the USA Bobsled headquarters in Lake Placid, NY.

As alleged in the complaint, beginning in 2012 under the guise of athletic medical care, Wilhelm would repeatedly touch Ms. Evans' genitals and inner groin area, frequently treating her adductors, despite no issues specific to that area. Several of her teammates also experienced Wilhelm's tendency to "go for the adductor," irrespective of their wishes or consent. Wilhelm also photographed Ms. Evans and her teammates while they were in states of undress and was known to have his camera out videoing or taking photographs in the start house, as athletes dressed and warmed up. Ms. Evans and her teammates formally reported Wilhelm's repeated nonconsensual photography in 2017 to USA Bobsled, but the USOPC and USA Bobsled dismissed the complaint and failed to initiate any sort of investigation into Wilhelm's predatory conduct.

"The repeated molestation and sexual assault I suffered at the hands of John Wilhelm left me physically and emotionally damaged, to the point where I experience chronic anxiety and fell out of love with the sport of bobsledding," said Aja Evans. "This lawsuit is not only to spare other athletes from the predatory behavior of Mr. Wilhelm, who continues to practice sports medicine, but also to hold USA Bobsled and the USOPC accountable for their role in enabling my abuser and neglecting the wellbeing of their athletes."

During the decade of abuse Evans experienced, she was an elite bobsledder for team USA and earned a bronze Olympic medal at the 2014 Sochi Olympics. The lawsuit alleges that by failing to investigate and put a stop to Wilhelm's behavior, USA Bobsled and the USOPC ultimately failed to protect their athletes. Additionally, the lawsuit alleges that USA Bobsled fostered and maintained both a culture of silence around athlete discomfort and the systemic inequities suffered by athletes of color.

Through the [New York Survivors Act](#), signed into law by Governor Hochul in May 2022, Evans was provided a path forward to pursue justice against her abuser and his enablers, which may not have been possible otherwise. The act provides a one-year lookback window, which opened in November 2022, for adult survivors of abuse to file lawsuits, irrespective of the traditional statute of limitations.

“My client suffered abhorrent and persistent sexual and emotional abuse at the hands of Mr. Wilhelm, who was sheltered and enabled by USA Bobsledding and the USOPC’s culture of silence,” said Michelle Simpson Tuegel, a nationally recognized victims’ rights attorney representing Ms. Evans. “Unfortunately, her experience is all too common and is in many ways similar to the widespread sexual abuse USA gymnasts faced by Larry Nassar. While nothing can erase the trauma Aja suffered, we are committed to bringing both Mr. Wilhelm and the national organizations which enabled his predation to justice.”

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Attorney [Michelle Simpson Tuegel](#) is the founding partner of The Simpson Tuegel Law Firm and has represented sexual abuse and assault survivors in high-profile cases such as the Larry Nassar litigation against The U.S. Olympic Committee, Michigan State University, and USA Gymnastics; sexual assault survivors at the University of Southern California; female students in Title IX lawsuits around the country; and clergy abuse survivors nationwide. She recently obtained a record \$44.6 million dollar verdict against Hilton Hotels for facilitating the sexual assault of a hotel guest. Michelle is licensed to practice in Texas and New York.

Attorney [Maryssa Simpson](#) is a Partner at The Simpson Tuegel Law Firm, who specializes in sexual assault cases and serious personal injury matters. Maryssa has experience in representing clients in complex business and employment litigation, achieving significant successes for Receivers and Trustees in ancillary cases to receiverships and bankruptcies. Maryssa is a “Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch in America” for 2022-2024.