

She graduated with a 4.0 as a double major. She started as a center midfielder. She was the first Academic All-American and NCAA Sportswoman of the Year Nominee in the school's Division II history.

I am her. Those describe me. But, so do these.

She has anxiety. She is depressed. She has panic attacks and nightmares.

My name is Gwen Schemm, and I'm a former Division II collegiate soccer player. Thank you for listening to my testimony today.

On paper, everything appeared fine. As a matter of fact, it appeared more than fine. I was excelling in everything I did. Sure, there were challenges, but I overcame. On paper, I looked extraordinary. But, when that paper flipped, there was a side of me I wanted no one to know.

The statistics surrounding student-athlete mental health are staggering to the point where the NCAA has declared mental health as a health and safety concern facing athletes. It scares me to think that I was almost just another number.

Coaches know what to do when an athlete's body turns against them, but what about their mind? They're trained in CPR and concussion protocol, but what about being educated on the signs and symptoms of mental illness?

Right now, there are grassroots movements across high schools and college campuses starting the conversation about student-athlete mental health. But, it shouldn't be up to just the student-athletes.

By supporting the Education-Coaches-Mental Health Training piece of legislation, you can help student-athletes catalyze a culture shift in athletics alongside their coaches. You can help coaches learn the warning signs.

Let's do it before it's too late.

Thank you for your time today and consideration for this piece of legislation.