

# Letters on the Penn State scandal

17 November 2011

*The following letters were sent in response to The Penn State scandal and sports in America, published November 15, 2011.*

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As usual the WSWWS addresses a complex and difficult issue with compassion and insight missing in “mainstream” media. There are two additional points requiring attention. Once again, all sectors of mainstream media demonstrate total ignorance of the presumption of innocence. However serious the charges against Sandusky, they are allegations, *not* statements of fact. A grand jury indictment is *not* a finding of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt; it is based on statements given by witnesses chosen exclusively by the prosecution to establish probable cause that a crime has been committed. These witnesses will not be subject to cross examination until the criminal trial before a jury, where Sandusky will have the right as all criminals accused—except those designated “enemy combatants” in terrorism cases—to probe the credibility of his accuser(s).

After the Michael Jackson sexual molestation trial and the Dominique Strauss Kahn fiasco, the media should be cognizant of these issues. (Granted Sandusky is an easier target than Jackson or Strauss-Kahn as he lacks their financial resources and political influence; he is also inarticulate and obviously possesses limited intellect. Nonetheless he is entitled to the same due process protections.)

Sandusky’s constitutional protections also raise a concomitant issue: the right of the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to have suspected criminal activity promptly reported to the authorities so it can be investigated and prosecuted. Not only the accused but the people through their representative, the

prosecuting attorney, are entitled to a fair hearing. Paterno and his associates, whether the coaching staff or university administrators, failed to report obvious suspected criminal activity to the proper authorities: the police. That is the most culpable conduct at this stage of the crisis and should be viewed legally and morally accordingly.

Finally, the people of Pennsylvania have a serious question to ask themselves: will it consent to tax raises or whatever financial sacrifices are necessary to make up for the \$50 million the University will lose if the football program is cut back or eliminated, or will it continue to allow its children to be held hostage by a system that is rotten to the core?

Sincerely,

Peter L  
Connecticut, USA

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This is a tragic event, and you are right, that there is no cheerful side to this story. The cover-up appears to be financially motivated, which is all together unsurprising in the big business of college athletics.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the fact that in many cases, Division 1 college football coaches’ salaries are more than 20 times higher than line administrative staff at these universities.

USC’s football coach makes upwards of \$5 million per year, while young faculty in the humanities make about \$125,000 per year and administrative assistants make \$27,000 per year.

The outrageous salaries for coaching staff call into question the academic mission of universities. Furthermore, these salaries serve to underscore the existing social inequality in an already polarized America.

Jason S  
Los Angeles, California

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I could not agree more David, especially in my area where spending on sports has increased by 121 percent and funding for education has declined. During our union's notorious debates with representatives from the board of trustees, the issue arose as to superfluous spending on campus and whether athletics should be axed to save any university department from closing. The response was, "We can't do that. We have to make sure the local Ramada Inn is full each time a game is played." So, Ramada Inns here are now more important than preserving departments and student education.

Tony W

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It is so refreshing to read something written by an individual with a brain developed past 3rd grade and who can think on their own. This is a rare commodity in America today. Yes, sports in America today is Rome's gladiators. Keep the people preoccupied while the country is raped by the 1 percent. Who is the most dangerous person in America today that even the 1-percenters fear? A thinking person. But in America they are few and far between.

David D



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