

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 27, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. President and Majority Leader McConnell,

As victims of domestic and sexual assault, we write to express our deepest concerns regarding your actions and various statements on the serious allegations that have been raised concerning Judge Brett Kavanaugh and his possible elevation to the highest court in the country.

In light of today's Senate Judiciary Committee hearing which will feature testimony from Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and Judge Brett Kavanaugh, and to ensure respect for due process, we ask that you give a formal apology to Dr. Ford, as well as Ms. Deborah Ramirez for your disparaging and uninformed remarks.

Additionally, we ask that you postpone any votes on Judge Kavanaugh until a formal investigation is made into these troubling allegations, as well as those of Ms. Julie Swetnick, who detailed horrific conduct on the part of Judge Kavanaugh in an affidavit.

Since Dr. Ford's story has become public, she has been subjected to countless smears, threats, and hostility to her claims. Unfortunately, this behavior is why many victims fail to come forward and it is even more troubling given that, in this case, it has not been reserved to right-wing media personalities or activists; it has come from elected officials as well.

On September 24th, after the sexual assault claims of Ms. Ramirez were released to the press, Senator McConnell went to the Senate floor and delivered a speech where he asserted:

This shameful, shameful smear campaign has hit a new low... Senate Democrats and their allies are trying to destroy [Judge Kavanaugh's] personal and professional life on the basis of decades-old allegations that are unsubstantiated and uncorroborated.¹

These comments undermine the Majority Leader's comments on September 18th that Dr. Ford "certainly does deserve a right to be heard" and that a hearing where she gives testimony "will be handled in a fair manner."² Also undermining these remarks are Senator McConnell's interest in

¹ *McConnell: Democrats behind 'despicable' smear job on Kavanaugh*, Courier Journal (Sept. 24, 2018) (online at <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/politics/2018/09/24/mitch-mcconnell-says-brett-kavanaugh-allegations-despicable-smear/1413540002/>).

² *McConnell: 'Pretty Obvious This Is All About Delaying the Process'*, CNS News (Sept. 19, 2018) (online at <https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/susan-jones/mcconnell-pretty-obvious-all-about-delaying-process>).

accelerating the confirmation process, regardless of the substance of Dr. Ford's testimony. On September 21st, Senator McConnell stated:

In the very near future, Judge Kavanaugh will be on the United States Supreme Court... We're going to plow right through it and do our job.³

Unfortunately, Senator McConnell's comments pale in comparison to the blatant smears and insults that President Trump has levied at Judge Kavanaugh's accusers. On Twitter, the President stated of Dr. Ford:

I have no doubt that, if the attack on Dr. Ford was as bad as she says, charges would have been immediately filed with local Law Enforcement Authorities by either her or her loving parents. I ask that she bring those filings forward so that we can learn date, time, and place!⁴

After Ms. Ramirez came forward with her allegations, President Trump stated:

The second accuser has nothing. She thinks maybe it could have been him, maybe not. She admits that she was drunk. She admits time lapses. There were time lapses. This is a person, and this is a series of statements, that's going to take one of the most talented and one of the greatest intellects from a judicial standpoint in our country, going to keep him off the United States Supreme Court?⁵

In both of President Trump's comments, there appears to be more respect and consideration given to Judge Kavanaugh's reputation and career, rather than to the welfare of the accusers. In addition to recent death threats that forced her to relocate from her home, Dr. Ford has undergone therapy for her alleged trauma. Additionally, in response to queries as to why she did not come forward earlier, Dr. Ford is reported to have said, "Why suffer through the annihilation if it's not going to matter?"⁶

Furthermore, your positions are all the more troubling given the frequency of sexual misconduct in federal government workplaces. A 1995 study conducted by the Merit Systems Protection Board showed that out of 8,000 federal employees, 44 percent of women and 19 percent of men

³ *McConnell: We're going to 'plow right through' and get Kavanaugh confirmed despite assault allegation*, (Sept. 21, 2018) (online at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/09/21/mitch-mcconnell-were-going-plow-right-through-ford-allegation/1380905002/>).

⁴ Trump, Donald (@realDonaldTrump). "I have no doubt that, if the attack on Dr. Ford was as bad as she says, charges would have been immediately filed with local Law Enforcement Authorities by either her or her loving parents. I ask that she bring those filings forward so that we can learn date, time, and place!" Sept. 21, 2018, 8:14 A.M. Tweet.

⁵ *Trump Unleashes on Kavanaugh Accuser as Key Republican Wavers*, New York Times (Sept. 25, 2018) (online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/25/us/politics/lisa-murkowski-brett-kavanaugh.html>).

⁶ *California professor, writer of confidential Brett Kavanaugh letter, speaks out about her allegation of sexual assault*, Washington Post (Sept. 16, 2018) (online at https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/california-professor-writer-of-confidential-brett-kavanaugh-letter-speaks-out-about-her-allegation-of-sexual-assault/2018/09/16/46982194-b846-11e8-94eb-3bd52dfe917b_story.html?utm_term=.e1b3f0f420c2).

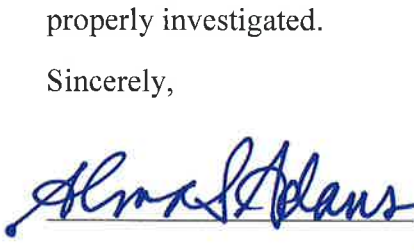
reported unwanted sexual attention in their respective places of employment.⁷ A more recent CQ Roll Call survey of congressional staff in July 2016 revealed that four in 10 women believed sexual harassment is a problem on Capitol Hill, and one in six said they personally had been victims.⁸ Of course, as stated previously, those numbers may be low because of workplace power dynamics, which are exacerbated on Capitol Hill. Kristin Alden, the founder of an employment law firm in Washington stated,

You're dealing with high-profile people and people are really afraid. The fear factor is tremendous, much stronger than we've found it to be in private sector or executive agencies.⁹

With this being the case, it is even more important that all allegations related to Judge Kavanaugh are taken seriously. Congressional staff should feel confident that their bosses do not condone sexual misconduct, and will not shame men and women who are brave enough to come forward. Your comments make it impossible for staff to be confident that this is true.

In conclusion, we write to ask you to reconsider making any more remarks disparaging the character of Dr. Ford, Ms. Ramirez, and others who allege sexual misconduct on the part of Judge Kavanaugh without a proper examination of the facts. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer has called on Senator McConnell to apologize for his "smear job" comments. We join this request and ask for President Trump to do the same. We further request fair and impartial consideration of Dr. Ford's testimony, proper balancing of her story with Judge Kavanaugh's testimony, and the postponement of any votes on Kavanaugh until all allegations have been properly investigated.

Sincerely,



ALMA S. ADAMS, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



GWEN MOORE
Member of Congress



ANN KUSTER
Member of Congress



JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress



DEBBIE DINGELL
Member of Congress

⁷ *Predatory Behavior: The Dark Side of Capitol Hill*, CQ Roll Call (Feb. 2, 2017) (online at <https://www.rollcall.com/news/predatory-behavior-capitol-hill-sexual-harassment>).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*