



Joint Statement of Ujima: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community;
National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault; Black Women's Blueprint and
Women of Color Network, Inc.

Good morning. I'm Lisalyn R. Jacobs, and this morning, I will be speaking on behalf of 4 national organizations dedicated to eradicating sexual and domestic violence and centered in their advocacy on behalf of Black women and of women of color: National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault, Women of Color Network, Black Women's Blueprint and Ujima: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community.

I was one year post law school when Professor Anita Hill was summoned before the Senate Judiciary Committee. I have now been practicing for some 28 years, and while some things have changed – the Violence Against Women Act is 24 years old, how we talk to our children about things like consent in relationships, and the Ranking Member of Senate Judiciary, Dianne Feinstein, is a woman – some things have not. Women of color and Native women were then and remain at greatest risk for sexual violence in this country, yet we are unlikely to report it because if we do, we are judged not credible, and people worry aloud at great length about how our truth telling may adversely impact the future of those who harmed us. We recognize that Dr. Christine Blasey Ford is being similarly stigmatized, and that she has been threatened and had to go into hiding as a result. We are here to stand with her, to say that we believe her and to demand a fair process going forward. Dr. Ford deserves our thanks, first and foremost for having come forward once her identity was revealed against her wishes and without her consent.

Now as in 1991, those in control of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and the Senate itself are determined to rush through a Supreme Court candidate with inadequate time to examine serious and credible charges of sexual violence – 28 years ago, sexual harassment – with no consideration, and no respect for the traumatic impact on the witness, and in this instance, with insufficient time for the FBI to talk to all relevant witnesses prior to the scheduling of a hearing. Time has vindicated Professor Hill, and we should heed her wise words. Senate Judiciary should not fail to “demonstrate its appreciation for both the seriousness of sexual harassment claims and the need for public confidence in the character of a nominee to the Supreme Court.”

It's pretty incredible to me that the Judiciary Committee's leadership seems unwilling to commit to obtaining the information it needs prior to hearing from Dr. Ford. I worked for the U.S. Justice Department in the mid-90's, including work on judicial nominations. I handled a candidate about whom several people raised concerns regarding sexual harassment. Several did not wish to speak about the candidate unless assured confidentiality. FBI agents interviewed them, secured the

needed information, and frequently uncovered the names of additional witnesses who needed to be interviewed in the process. If we are committed to finding out as much relevant information as we can, and we should be, the FBI should be dispatched without delay.

Finally, we want to share our deep concern regarding suggestions we've seen that Judge Kavanaugh's age at the time of the alleged assault should give him a pass, or that what's been alleged constitutes a mere, "youthful indiscretion." That Black and brown youth aged 17 and significantly younger are charged and incarcerated as adults every day should neither be lost on anyone, nor glossed over in this matter.

I often open or close my remarks with the words of civil rights advocate Fannie Lou Hamer. Fannie Lou was a staunch advocate for voting rights, which, among many others, including abortion, healthcare and recognition of the Native Hawaiian and Native Alaskan people, would be imperiled if Judge Kavanaugh were to be confirmed. Fannie Lou once said, "as women, we've got a job to do. We've got to bring in justice where there has been so much injustice."

Justice demands a process that treats Dr. Ford far better than the derision, scorn, and humiliation to which Professor Hill was subjected. She is not on trial. Justice demands that we respect that Dr. Ford is a survivor of trauma, and that the Senate Judiciary Committee hear from experts on the lasting impact of trauma on survivors. Justice demands that the hearing process be paused while the FBI reopens its investigation and talks to any witnesses with knowledge that bears on the information that Dr. Ford has provided. And finally, justice demands that the American people have confidence not only in the integrity of those who sit on the highest court, but those responsible for giving their, "advice and consent," to the President, and the process by which they give it.

Thank you.

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