September 26, 2018

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn
Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Chuck Grassley

Dear Senators,

We write as law professors who have significant experience teaching, researching, and writing about issues of gender violence and representing gender violence survivors in family, civil, and criminal courts. We write to express our profound concern about the plans for evaluating the allegations of Judge Kavanaugh’s sexual misconduct that have been announced to date, especially in light of recently emerging claims. The Senate should seek to review all available evidence, including witness testimony relating to all of the allegations raised, in order to evaluate both the competing accounts of underlying events and the nominee’s reflection on those accounts. The allegations should be fully and sensitively investigated by experts who are trained in trauma-informed interviewing techniques before the hearing is held. In this instance, as Dr. Ford has requested, the investigation should be performed by the FBI. There should be no rush in undertaking this important task. All those concerned both with the gravity of the allegations and the integrity of the Court and our systems of governance should prioritize investigation over politics. Particularly given the most recent information about additional allegations, it is incumbent upon the Committee to delay the hearings and a vote until a thorough investigation of all allegations is completed.

The Senate’s approach to the allegations raised by Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, Deborah Ramirez, and now, Julie Swetnick, is deeply troubling. Public statements prejudging the credibility of witnesses and the outcome of the proceedings reflect the very type of biases that have no place in any investigation and that run counter to the purpose of these hearings. The attacks on the witnesses’ credibility and integrity are reminiscent of outdated and discredited stereotypes that defy best practices developed through decades of research about fair and effective treatment of sexual violence survivors. Both criminal law and psychological research on the impact of trauma roundly reject the idea that sexual violence is restricted to forced sexual intercourse. Similarly, legislatures and courts have rejected for decades the outdated notion that allegations must be corroborated in order to be credible. In this matter, however, corroborating witnesses do exist, and the exclusion of these witnesses demonstrates that the process is not designed to assess the truth of the allegations.

The Committee’s process undermines the very laws that Congress has claimed credit for passing. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), initially enacted nearly 25 years ago, aims to recognize the importance of upholding the dignity and safety of those who come forward to report that they were victims of sexual misconduct. Best practices reinforce the importance of fair process and meaningful justice for gender violence survivors. The rush to a hearing and a vote, without investigation, mirrors the miscarriage of justice in many domestic violence cases, where cases typically are rushed through what can best be described as “perfunctory justice.”
We are additionally concerned about the selection of a prosecutor to question Dr. Ford. Questioning by a prosecutor fuels misguided ideas that the allegations raised should be proved “beyond a reasonable doubt.” That standard of proof has no place here, since the liberty and equitable issues at stake in criminal cases are not at issue. We would expect the Committee to conduct its own questioning, as it has done with other nominees and throughout this process.

This is neither a criminal trial nor a civil proceeding. The focus should be on the nominee’s intellect, demeanor, judicial temperament and moral conduct. Senators should be concerned with the nominee’s judgment, insight, and capacity for reflection on the impact of a person’s behavior on others. Senators should assess how the nominee engages with complex and emotionally charged social issues, such as those that may come before the court. All of these issues are implicated by the allegations made by Dr. Ford, Ms. Ramirez, and Ms. Swetnick, and the Senate should have a full understanding of the events underlying those allegations before it determines whether Judge Kavanaugh should be elevated to the Supreme Court.

Respectfully,*

Julie Goldscheid, Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law
Donna Coker, Professor of Law, University of Miami
Caroline Bettinger-Lopez, Professor of Clinical Law, University of Miami School of Law
Deborah M. Weissman, Reef C. Ivey II Distinguished Professor of Law, University of North Carolina School of Law
Leigh Goodmark, Professor of Law and Director, Gender Violence Clinic, University of Maryland Carey School of Law
Ruthann Robson, Professor of Law & University Distinguished Professor, City University of New York School of Law
Cynthia Soohoo, Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law
Donna Lee, Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law
Sarah Valentine, Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law
Mary Lynch, Kate Stoneman Chair in Law and Democracy, Director, Domestic Violence Prosecution Clinic, Albany Law School
Jill Engle, Professor of Clinical Law, Penn State Law
Julie Dahlstrom, Clinical Associate Professor, Boston University School of Law
Christine Butler, Practitioner in Residence, Suffolk University Law School
Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia, Samuel Weiss Faculty Scholar, Clinical Professor of Law, Penn State Law - University Park
Brenda Smith, Professor, American University, Washington College of Law
Sarah Boonin, Clinical Professor of Law, Suffolk University Law School
Deena Hurwitz, Director, Atrocity Prevention Legal Training Project, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law
Marcy Karin, Jack and Lovell Olender Professor of Law, University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law
Ruth Stone, Ms., Retired clinical law professor
Kathryn Stanchi, Jack E. Feinberg Professor of Litigation, Temple University School of Law
Kelly Weisberg, Professor of Law, Hastings College of Law, Univ. of Calif.
Robert Solomon, Clinical Professor of Law, University of California, Irvine
Diane Klein, Professor of Law, University of La Verne College of Law
Kit Kinports, Professor of Law and Polisher Family Distinguished Faculty Scholar, Penn State Law (University Park)
Kristina Campbell, Jack & Lovell Olender Professor of Law, UDC David A. Clarke School of Law
Wendi Warren H. Binford, Professor of Law & Director, Clinical Law Program, Willamette University
Merle Weiner, Philip H. Knight Professor of Law, University of Oregon
Barbara Woodhouse, LQC Lamar Professor of Law, Emory University School of Law
Paula Galowitz, Clinical Professor of Law Emerita, New York University School of Law
Ashley Binetti, Dash/Muse Fellow, Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute
Sarah Rogerson, Clinical Professor of Law, Albany Law School
Mary Helen McNeal, Professor of Law, Syracuse University College of Law
Lindsay Harris, Assistant Professor of Law, University of the District of Columbia Law
Denise Gilman, Clinical Professor, University of Texas Law School
Susan Hazeldean, Assistant Professor of Law, Brooklyn Law School
Courtney Cross, Assistant Professor of Clinical Legal Instruction, University of Alabama School of Law
Phyllis Goldfarb, Jacob Burns Foundation Professor Emerita of Clinical Law, George Washington University Law School
Josh Gupta-Kagan, Associate Professor, University of South Carolina School of Law
Jeffrey Baker, Associate Clinical Professor of Law, Pepperdine University School of Law
Laila Hlass, Professor of Practice, Tulane University, School of Law
Erica Schommer, Clinical Associate Professor of Law, St. Mary's University School of Law
Johanna Bond, Professor of Law, Washington and Lee University
Patrick Parenteau, Professor of Law, Vermont Law School
Elissa Steglich, Clinical Professor, University of Texas School of Law
Bridget Crawford, James D. Hopkins Professor of Law, Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University
Stephanie Goldenhersh, Assistant Director for the Family Practice/Senior Clinical Instructor, Harvard Legal Aid Bureau
Rebecca Zietlow, Charles W. Fornoff Professor of Law and Values, University of Toledo College of Law
Melissa Breger, Professor of Law, Albany Law School
Sally Frank, Professor of Law, Drake University
Katherine Gallagher, Visiting Clinical Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law
Robert Seibel, Distinguished Visiting Prof. (ret.), California Western School of Law
Jessica Emerson, Director, Human Trafficking Prevention Project, University of Baltimore School of Law
Lisa Davis, Associate Professor of Law, CUNY Law School
Julie Saffren, Lecturer, Domestic Violence, Santa Clara University School of Law
Elizabth MacDowell, Professor of Law, William S. Boyd School of Law, University of Nevada Las Vegas
Natalie Nanasi, Assistant Professor, SMU Dedman School of Law
Carolyn Blum, Clinical Professor of Law Emerita, Berkeley Law
Janet Calvo, Professor, CUNY School of Law
Dina Haynes, Professor of Law, New England Law|Boston
Margaret Flint, Professor of Law, Elisabeth Haub School of Law, Pace University
Nermeen Arastu, Associate Professor, CUNY School of Law
Laurie Kohn, Associate Professor of Law, The George Washington Law School
Sabi Ardalan, Assistant Clinical Professor, Harvard Law School
Kelly Browe-Olson, Director of Clinical Programs, UA Little Rock
Melanie DeRoussé, Clinical Associate Professor of Law, University of Kansas School of Law
Michelle Madden Dempsey, Harold Reuschlein Scholar Chair and Professor of Law, Villanova University
N Charles Widger School of Law
Mariela Olivares, Associate Professor of Law, Howard University School of Law
Cynthia Fountaine, Professor of Law, Southern Illinois University School of Law
Erin Buzuvis, Professor, Western New England University School of Law
Kris McDaniel-Miccio, Professor of Law, University of Denver Sturm College of Law
Shirley Lin, Acting Assistant Professor of Law, New York University School of Law
Theresa L. (Terry) Wright, Professor/Director of Externships, Willamette University (formerly at Lewis and Clark School of Law)
Kimberly Jordan, Clinical Professor of Law, Moritz College of Law, The Ohio State University
Amy Dillard, Associate Professor of Law, University of Baltimore School of Law
Joan Howarth, Distinguished Visiting Professor, Boyd School of Law, UNLV
Marcia McCormick, Professor of Law and Women's and Gender Studies, Saint Louis University School of Law
Elizabeth McCormick, Associate Clinical Professor of Law, University of Tulsa College of Law
Katherine Puzone, Associate Professor of Law, Juvenile Defense Clinic, Barry University School of Law
Marie Failinger, Professor of Law, Mitchell Hamline School of Law
Stephanie Willbanks, Professor of Law, Vermont Law School
Laura Padilla, Professor of Law, California Western School of Law
Beth Posner, Clinical Associate Professor of Law, University of North Carolina School of Law
Arlene Kanter, Professor of Law, Syracuse University
Joan Meier, Professor of Law, George Washington University Law School
Ann Bartow, Professor of Law, University of New Hampshire School of Law
Ilene Klein, Clinical Law Professor, New England Law/Boston
Naomi Cahn, Professor, George Washington University Law School
Allison Korn, Assistant Dean for Experiential Education, UCLA School of Law
Erla Jacobsen, Managing Attorney/Assistant Professor, Vermont Law School
Gowri Ramachandran, Professor of Law, Southwestern Law School
Daria Fisher Page, Clinical Associate Professor, University of Iowa College of Law
Angelique EagleWoman, Visiting Professor, Mitchell Hamline School of Law
Eric Sirota, Clinical Teaching Fellow, Michigan Law School
Florence Roisman, William F. Harvey Professor of Law and Chancellor's Professor, Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law
Doris Brogan, Professor of Law, Harold Reuschlein Leadership Chair, Villanova University
Charles Widger School of Law
Merrick Rossein, Professor, CUNY School of Law
Kalyani Robbins, Professor of Law, Florida Internation University College of Law
Seema Mohapatra, Associate Professor of Law, Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law
Macarena Saez, Faculty Director, Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian law, American University Washington College of Law
Suelynn Scarnecchia, Clinical Professor of Law, University of Michigan
Cyra Choudhury, Professor of Law, FIU College of Law
Martha Albertson Fineman, Robert W Woodruff Professor of Law, Emory University
Ann Cammett, Sr. Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law
Sally Goldfarb, Professor, Rutgers Law School
Margaret Johnson, Professor of Law, Co-Director, Center on Applied Feminism, University of Baltimore School of Law
Shawn Boyne, Professor of Law, IU Robert H. McKinney School of Law
Lynn Daggett, Smithmoore P. Myers Chair and Professor, Gonzaga Law School
Elizabeth Schneider, Rose L. Hoffer Professor of Law, Brooklyn Law School
Bridgette Carr, Clinical Professor of Law and Director Human Trafficking Clinic, University of Michigan Law School
Richard Humphrey, Legal Research Instructor, Indiana Univ. McKinney School of Law
Anette Sikka, Assistant Professor, University of Illinois Springfield
Bevrlty Balos, Clinical Professor of Law Emerita, University of Minnesota
Margaret Ivey, Clinical Professor of Law, University of Richmond School of Law
Pamela A. Vesilind, Visiting Assistant Professor of Law, Vermont Law School
Eduardo Capulong, Professor of Law, University of Montana Alexander Blewett III School of Law
Anna Cominsky, Visiting Associate Professor of Law, New York Law School
Dana Harrington Conner, Professor of Law, Widener University, Delaware Law School
Elizabeth Brundige, Associate Clinical Professor of Law and Director, Gender Justice Clinic, Cornell Law School
Stephanie Davidson, Clinical Instructor, Harvard Law School
Jane M. Spinak, Edward Ross Aranow Clinical Professor of Law, Columbia Law School
Katy Ramsey, Assistant Professor of Law, University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law
Stephanie Farrior, Distinguished Faculty Scholar, Vermont Law School
Ruth Anne Robbins, Distinguished Clinical Professor of Law, Rutgers Law School
Ann Hodges, Professor of Law Emeritus, University of Richmond School of Law
Maria Isabel Medina, Ferris Family Distinguished Professor of Law, Loyola University New Orleans College of Law
Jennifer Moore, Professor of Law, University of New Mexico
Srividhya Ragavan, Professor of Law, Texas A&M School of Law
Margaret Drew, Associate Professor of Law, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
Laurie Morin, Professor, University of the District of Columbia School of Law
Teemu Ruskola, Jonas Robitscher Professor of Law, Emory University
Jennifer Green, Human Rights Litigation and International Advocacy Clinic, University of Minnesota Law School
Jeannine Bell, Richard S. Melvin Professor of Law, IU Maurer School of Law -Bloomington
Janis McDonald, Emeritus Professor of Law, Co-Director Cold Case Justice Initiative, Syracuse University College of Law
Lisa Martin, Assistant Professor of Law, University of South Carolina School of Law
Janet Ainsworth, John D. Eshelman Professor of Law, Seattle University
Jennifer Drobac, R. Bruce Townsend Professor of Law, Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law
Verna Williams, Interim Dean, University of Cincinnati College of Law
Leonard Sandler, Clinical Professor of Law, Director, Law and Policy in Action Clinic, University of Iowa College of Law
Mary Anne Franks, Professor of Law, University of Miami School of Law
Dr. Jody Madeira, Professor of Law, Indiana University Maurer School of Law
Jessica Feinberg, Associate Professor, Mercer University School of Law
Elizabeth Belmont, Clinical Professor of Law, Washington and Lee University School of Law
Carwina Weng, Clinical Professor, Indiana University Maurer School of Law
Susan Brooks, Associate Dean and Professor of Law, Drexel University Kline School of Law
Barbara Ann White, Professor of Law, University of Baltimore School of Law
Brook Baker, Professor, Northeastern U. School of Law
Joan Vogel, Professor of Law, Vermont Law School
Stephanie Wildman, Professor Emerita, Santa Clara University School of Law
Kathy Hessler, Clinical Law Professor, Lewis & Clark Law School
Yxta Murray, Professor of Law, Loyola Law School
Ana Potratz Acosta, Assistant Teaching Professor, Mitchell Hamline School of Law
Kathryn Mercer, Professor of Law, Case Western Reserve University School of Law
Beth Stephens, Distinguished Professor of Law, Rutgers Law School
Sarah Redfield, Professor, UNH School of Law
Jeana Lungwitz, Clinical Professor, University of Texas School of Law
Aparna, Polavarapu, Assistant Professor of Law, University of South Carolina School of Law
Hannah Garry, Clinical Professor of Law, USC Gould School of Law
Mary Pat Treuthart, Professor of Law, Gonzaga University School of Law
Susan Appleton, Lemma Barkeloo & Phoebe Couzins Professor of Law, Washington University
Lisa Rivera, Adjunct Professor, Domestic Violence Litigation Clinic, St. Johns University School of Law
Amanda Beltz, Adjunct Professor, St. John's University School of Law
Sandra Babcock, Professor of Clinical Law, Cornell Law School
Ann Freedman, Associate Professor of Law, Rutgers Law School
Deborah Tuerkheimer, Class of 1940 Research Professor, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law
James Rowan, Professor of Law, Northeastern University School of Law
Alafair Burke, Professor of Law, Hofstra University School of Law
Kimberly Robinson, Austin Owen Research Scholar and Professor of Law, University of Richmond School of Law
Lila Meadows, Clinical Teaching Fellow, University of Baltimore
Brianna Ford, Staff Attorney/Clinical Fellow, University of Baltimore School of Law
Peter Halewood, Gov. George Pataki Professor of Law, Albany Law School
Lisa Mead, Director & Lecturer at Law, UCLA School of Law
Sarah Sherman-Stokes, Clinical Instructor, Boston University School of Law
Tracey Roberts, Assistant Professor, Samford University, Cumberland School of Law
Rose Corrigan, Associate Professor of Law & Politics, Drexel University
Colleen Shanahan, Associate Clinical Professor of Law, Columbia Law School
Saba Ahmed, Clinical Instructor, University of the District of Columbia, School of Law
Robert Verchick, Professor of Law and Gauthier-St. Martin Endowed Chair, Loyola University New Orleans
Joan Shaughnessy, Roger D. Groot Professor of Law, Washington and Lee University School of Law
Esther Vicente, Professor of Law, Inter-American University of Puerto Rico Law Faculty
Debra Chopp, Clinical Professor of Law, University of Michigan Law School
Susan Looper-Friedman, Professor of Law, Capital University Law School
Deborah Merritt, Professor of Law, The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law
Zohra Ahmed, Clinical Teaching Fellow, Cornell Law School
Susan Looper-Friedman, Professor of Law, Capital University Law School
Angela Cornell, Clinical Professor Law, Cornell Law School
Blair Thompson, Clinical Teaching Fellow, University of Baltimore School of Law
María D. Ferns, Honorary law professor, Inter American University of Puerto Rico
Victoria Chase, Clinical Associate Professor, Rutgers Law
Nickole Miller, Clinical Teaching Fellow, University of Baltimore School of Law
Barbara Woodhouse, Professor of Law, Emory University
Lisa Mazzie, Professor of Legal Writing, Marquette University Law School
Teri McMurtry-Chubb, Professor of Law, Mercer University School of Law
Inga Laurent, Associate Professor of Law, Director of Externships, Gonzaga University School of Law
Dawn Johnsen, Walter W. Foskett Professor of Law, Indiana University Maurer School of Law
Gillian Chadwick, Associate Professor of Law, Washburn University School of Law
Gillian Dutton, Assoc. Prof. of Lawyering Skills, Seattle University School of Law
Judith Olin, Assistant Clinical Professor, University at Buffalo School of Law
Claire Thomas, Director, Asylum Clinic and Adj. Professor of Law, New York Law School
Melissa Deehring, Clinical Assistant Professor, Qatar University College of Law
Minna Kotkin, Professor of Law, Brooklyn Law School
Marcia Zug, Professor of Law, University of South Carolina
Anne Coughlin, Lewis F. Powell, Jr., Professor of Law, University of Virginia School of Law
Janet Heppard, Clinical Director; Associate Clinical Professor, University of Houston
Tiffany Murphy, Associate Professor, University of Arkansas School of Law
Sarah Burns, Professor of Clinical Law, New York University School of Law
Susan Feathers, Director of Public Interest, Rutgers Law
Kelly Behre, Director, Family Protection and Legal Assistance Clinic, UC Davis School of Law
Deborah Dinner, Associate Professor of Law, Emory University School of Law
Lisa Avalos, Assistant Professor, Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center
Angela Harris, Professor Emerita, University of California Davis School of Law
Laura Oren, Professor Emerita, University of Houston Law Center
Danielle Pelfrey Duryea, Clinical Visiting Assistant Professor, University at Buffalo, State University of New York
Cynthia Godsoe, Associate Professor of Law, Brooklyn Law School
Rachel Van Cleave, Professor of Law, Golden Gate University
Amie Lopez, Attorney, Amie Lopez Law, Inc.
Mary Dudziak, Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Law, Emory University School of Law
Rona Kaufman, Associate Professor of Law, Duquesne University School of Law
Margaret Russell, Interim Associate Provost, Santa Clara University
Cortney Lollar, James & Mary Lassiter Associate Professor of Law, University of Kentucky College of Law
Solangel Maldonado, Professor of Law, Seton Hall University School of Law
Hannah Brenner, Associate Professor of Law, California Western School of Law
Marilucy Gonzalez, Professor of Law, Interamerican University of Puerto Rico School of Law
Rachel Settlage, Associate Professor, Wayne State Law School
Theo Liebmann, Clinical Professor of Law, Hofstra Law School
Martha Mahoney, Professor of Law, University of Miami School of Law
Jane Korn, Professor of Law, Gonzaga University Law School
Patricia Oton, Law Professor, Inter-American University of Puerto Rico
Judith Maute, Retired Professor of Law, University of Oklahoma
Stacey Platt, Clinical Professor of Law & social Justice, Loyola University Chicago School of Law
Susan D. Rozelle, Professor of Law, Stetson University College of Law
Tanya Cooper, Director, Restoration and Justice Clinic and Assistant Clinical Professor of Law, Pepperdine University School of Law
Barbara, Atwood, Mary Anne Richey Professor of Law Emerita, University of Arizona Rogers College of Law
Sherry Colb, Professor, Cornell Law School
Fran Quigley, Clinical Professor of Law, Indiana University McKinney School of Law
Linda Fentiman, Professor of Law, Elisabeth Haub School of Law, Pace University
Elizabeth Keyes, Associate Professor, University of Baltimore School of Law
Mary Hansel, Lecturer in International Human Rights, Loyola Law School
Lori Duke, Clinical Professor, University of Texas School of Law
Katharine Baker, Professor of Law, IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law
Akilah Folami, Professor of Law, Maurice A. Deane School of Law
Maura Strassberg, Professor of Law, Drake Law School
Nancy Cantalupo, Associate Professor of Law, Barry University School of Law

*The parties listed here have signed in their individual capacities.

cc:
Sen. Dianne Feinstein
Sen. Orrin Hatch
Sen. Patrick Leahy
Sen. Lindsey Graham
Sen. Dick Durbin
Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse
Sen. Michael Lee
Sen. Amy Klobuchar
Sen. Ted Cruz
Sen. Christopher Coons
Sen. Ben Sasse
Sen. Richard Blumenthal
Sen. Jeff Flake
Sen. Mazie Hirono
Sen. Mike Crapo
Sen. Cory Booker
Sen. Thom Tillis
Sen. Kamala Harris
Sen. John Kennedy