

Heidi S. Bond

September 22, 2018

Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley,

I am writing to you as a woman who experienced sexual harassment at the hands of Judge Alex Kozinski, who went public with my story in December, and who had a mostly positive public reception to my story. It was incredibly meaningful to me that the judiciary convened a working group to address harassment, and that the Senate Judiciary committee held a hearing to hold the judiciary accountable for what it felt was an inadequate response.

It meant everything to me that in your opening statement, you read my words on the Senate floor about how it felt for me to experience sexual harassment. You were the first person to ask the Judiciary's representative if they had apologized to those of us who had come forward; the words I heard that day were the first time anyone from the judicial branch had ever expressed regret.

Coming forward about harassment was one of the hardest things I ever did. I pride myself on being a strong and independent woman; publicly exposing the fact that I had been vulnerable in the past was something I did not for myself, but because I hoped that doing so would pave the road to a better future, one where women did not need to stay silent about harassment.

Today I write to you to beg you to treat Dr. Christine Blasey Ford with the same respect that you treated me. I do not know her. I cannot know if her story is true. But I do know that her story mirrors mine. I also waited a decade before coming forward. The corroboration that the Washington Post listed for my story was an email with a friend, reminding me that I had told her about being sexually harassed and shown porn in his office.

Every attack that is being leveled at Dr. Blasey could be applied to me as well, and in that regard, it feels personal for me, and I suspect for many victims of harassment and assault. Whether she is telling the truth or not, the open disrespect that is being shown to her hurts many women.

When I went public with my story in December, many on the right wing decided that Kozinski was a liberal because he was on the Ninth Circuit; many on the left decided that Kozinski was a conservative because he was appointed by Reagan. I escaped much of the censure that Dr. Blasey has endured simply because it was not politically expedient for anyone to defend Kozinski. But issues of sexual assault and harassment should not be a matter of partisan politics.

For that reason, I implore you to collaborate with your colleagues on the Judiciary Committee so that you can establish a timetable to have an impartial investigation into Dr. Blasey's claims, while still leaving time for a vote on Kavanaugh's nomination before the midterm elections.

The precedent that is being set by your current actions actually creates an incentive for false claims. If claimants know that no investigation will result from a claim, they can sow doubt and distrust about any nominee simply by making a false claim. Nothing could be more conducive to establishing truth than a rule that claims of harassment will be vigorously investigated—and thoroughly debunked if untrue.

I also beg you, when this is over, to come together with your colleagues on the Judiciary Committee and to establish neutral rules for responding to these sorts of claims in the future, for all nominees, whether Democrat or Republican.

I know that your time is valuable, particularly at this moment. I thank you once again for listening to me in December, when I came out about sexual harassment, and in June, when the Senate held its hearings on harassment in the judiciary. I hope you are able to listen to me today as well.

With sincerest regard,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heidi Sacha Bond". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Heidi Sacha Bond