



*Statement in Support of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford
Members and Allies of Psychologists for Social Responsibility*

The organization Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR) strongly supports our colleague, Dr. Christine Blasey Ford. We thank her for her courage and for her commitment to fulfilling a civic duty, even in awareness that it involves considerable risk. We also celebrate the many statements of support she has received.

At the same time, we wish to state our dismay, sadness, and concern over adverse reactions to her efforts to describe her experience. We also strongly object to the treatment she has received by authorities and others, ranging from statements of doubt before even hearing her account to threats on her life. We recognize that, disturbingly, this kind of treatment is often experienced by survivors of sexual trauma when they report their abuse. We applaud her determination to persevere in spite of this treatment.

As clinical psychologists with expertise treating survivors of sexual assault, social and community psychologists, researchers and professors, we know that responses to the experience of sexual trauma often include reluctance and fear of speaking about the trauma. Sexual assault survivors are often not supported, and, in fact, families and institutions often respond to their reports of abuse with disbelief, disrespect and silencing. The rejection realistically fuels fear and increases the severity of post-traumatic symptoms. Thus, it is understandable, and expected that most survivors delay reporting abuse or never report it.

As other survivors and witnesses come forward we need to hear their stories too. What has become evident is not only the misogynistic climate of several “elite” educational institutions, but also that Mr. Kavanaugh and his close friends have contributed to this degrading institutional culture.

We urge the President and Senators to create conditions of safety as requested by Dr. Blasey’s attorneys, for her (and other survivors) to testify, including a full investigation if requested. This matter bears directly on the decision of suitability of a nominee to the Supreme Court.

Thanks to Dr. Mary Pelton-Cooper, President Elect of PsySR, Dr. Alice LoCicero, President of the Society for the Psychological Study of Peace and Conflict, and Dr. Luisa Saffiotti, Past President of PsySR, for initiating and writing this statement. Dr. Brad Olson, Past President of PsySR (affiliations listed for attribution only).