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CONTACT: Chase Tarrier, Public Policy Coordinator
End Domestic Abuse WI
chaset@endabusewi.org, 608.237.3985

Domestic Violence Advocates Condemn Kavanaugh Confirmation to Supreme Court

Madison – The following is a statement by Executive Director of End Domestic Abuse WI (End Abuse), Patti Seger. End Abuse is the Wisconsin coalition representing victims of domestic violence and the 70+ victim service providers across the state that comprise its membership.

This week, like many around the country, advocates for victims of domestic violence across Wisconsin witnessed Dr. Christine Blasey Ford courageously step forward to disclose her experience with Brett Kavanaugh, a man who is poised to join the most powerful court in the United States for a lifetime appointment. As advocates, we wish to express our unequivocal support for Dr. Ford, and all survivors, throughout what has surely been a traumatic and violating evaluation of the assault she experienced. Conversely, we would also like to express our disgust at comments made by Senate Majority Leader McConnell, President Trump and other members of Republican leadership regarding Dr. Ford's statements. Their willingness to prioritize loyalty and a successful court appointment over multiple credible allegations of assault and abuse is an affront to all survivors, as well as those that advocate on their behalf.

The notion, expressed by President Trump and others that a lack of immediate reporting of the sexual assault at the time it occurred is a reason to discount the credibility of Dr. Ford's claims is offensive, misguided and dangerous. Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault frequently choose not to report the crimes they have experienced for a multitude of reasons including fear of their assailant, fear of social isolation, discrimination, a desire to maintain their privacy and the fact that victims are so often not believed when they reach out for help, among many others.

Dr. Ford, Julie Swetnick, and the other accusers of Brett Kavanaugh have sacrificed their privacy, safety and normal lives in order to speak their truth. Their principled stand is nothing less than an act of heroism, and Dr. Ford's testimony is deserving of nothing less than full consideration by the 100 members of the US Senate who now hold the future of Judge Kavanaugh's appointment in their hands.

Despite objections from those members of the Judiciary Committee who voted to approve Brett Kavanaugh's appointment to the Supreme Court, this is not an issue of due process. Brett Kavanaugh is not being tried in a court of law. His rights as an accused person are not in question. What has been violated, however, is the safety and well-being of millions of victims of domestic and sexual violence

who were forced to sit idly by as a man with credible accusations of sexual assault against him moved one step closer to a position of extreme power and authority.

Survivors of domestic and sexual violence deserve to know that the people making decisions about the laws that govern their lives are honest, non-abusive members of society. We, as advocates for victims of domestic and sexual violence call on the members of the US Senate to oppose the appointment of Judge Kavanaugh, a man with multiple credible accusations of sexual assault against him.

At End Abuse we prioritize victim empowerment and offender accountability because we recognize them as the keys to restoring justice to those for whom it has been taken. We hope the full Senate will honor these same principles and give Dr. Ford the consideration she, and all survivors, deserve by voting no on the confirmation of Judge Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court.

Patti Seger
Executive Director
End Domestic Abuse WI

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End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence is the leading voice for victims of domestic abuse in Wisconsin. At End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, we educate shelter and program volunteers and advocates, law enforcement, legislators, and community members to provide safety and support to survivors. We strive to shift Wisconsin from the attitudes and beliefs that cause domestic violence to values of mutual respect and equality, and we partner with communities in the effort to prevent and end domestic abuse.

We encourage reporters to include the National Domestic Violence Hotline number [1-800-799-SAFE(7233)] in their stories for victims who need help. A list of local Wisconsin domestic violence victim service providers can be found at <http://www.endabusewi.org>.