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## **President Trump and GOP Leadership Mock and Smear Survivors, Wisconsin Advocates Appalled**

**Madison** — On Tuesday of this week, President Trump once again demonstrated his lack of respect for survivors of sexual and domestic violence by mocking Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, one of several women to accuse Judge Brett Kavanaugh of sexual misconduct. His comments come on the heels of a contentious Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in which Dr. Ford was questioned about the assault she experienced. On the same day that President Trump mocked Dr. Ford at a campaign rally, Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee released a highly unusual and inappropriate memo that purports to describe alleged comments of a sexual nature made by another Kavanaugh accuser, Julie Swetnick.

“This week, President Trump and Republican leadership truly sank to a new low when it comes to violence against women in this country,” said Patti Seger, Executive Director of End Domestic Abuse WI. “President Trump has yet again revealed that he does not respect women by openly flaunting his willingness to assault them, and by questioning the validity of their own experiences when they come forward with disclosures of sexual violence. His comments mocking Dr. Ford and her status as a survivor will surely go down in history as some of the most disturbing statements expressed by a sitting President.”

The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence noted that the release of the Senate Judiciary Committee statement violates the intent of the Rape Shield Rule drafted by the Committee in 1991 and voted into law by Congress in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994. This federal rule is meant to safeguard victims against the invasion of privacy, potential embarrassment and sexual stereotyping that is associated with public disclosure of intimate sexual details and the infusion of sexual innuendo into the factfinding process.

“As advocates for survivors of sexual and domestic violence, we are stunned by this behavior that flies in the face of decades of progress towards women’s empowerment.” continued Seger. “We hope the President and Republican leadership will find a way to educate themselves on violence against women and rethink this disturbing display of callous misogyny.”

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