

THE BLUE BANNER

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The Blue Banner is UNC Asheville's student newspaper. We publish each Tuesday except during summer sessions, finals week and holiday breaks. Our office is in Karpen 019.

The Blue Banner is a designated forum for free speech and welcomes letters to the editor, considering them on the basis of interest, space and timeliness. Letters and articles should be emailed to the editor-in-chief or to the appropriate section editor. Letters should include the writer's name, year in school and major, or other relationship to UNCA. Include a phone number to aid in verification. All articles are subject to editing.

EDITORIAL

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT DO NOT END WITH KAVANAUGH'S CONFIRMATION

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Despite Christine Blasey Ford's hearing before Congress, with a testimony regarding sexual misconduct allegations arguably more concise and composed than that of Supreme Court Nominee Brett Kavanaugh, his appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court was confirmed on Oct. 5 with a Senate vote 50-48. The nomination and vote were the most fiercely contested since Clarence Thomas's nomination in 1991 after allegations of sexual misconduct surfaced from Anita Hill.

In her opening statement for the Senate hearing on Sept. 26, Ford noted the extreme compromise of her safety following the allegations. Due to the overwhelming death threats she received, Ford and her family were forced to move out of their home and into several secure locations, protected by guards. Ford and her family are still unable to move back into their home after the appointment of Kavanaugh, as the threat of danger is still too high.

To begin to explain how deep our disappointment at Kavanaugh's confirmation goes, we would need all the pages of this newspaper and probably more and that would only capture a fraction of the feeling. Disappointment like this cuts right to the core, becomes disillusionment and invites us to lie down on the floor and feel hopeless. When Kavanaugh was sworn in, survivors of sexual violence everywhere received a devastating message that their voices and experiences don't matter. The whole hearing process felt grim from the start.

Conversations about sexual assault in this country have been completely derailed by conversations about false allegations, when the percentage of people who actually make false claims is shockingly low in contrast to the amount of people who experience sexual violence in their lifetimes. The willingness and speed with which people are ready to cast allegations aside is astonishing, equally so the people who attempt to

jump through every hoop they can to justify their support of abusers on local and national levels. Congratulations, you apologists have all scored a perfect 10.

If these past few weeks have been immensely tiresome for you and you've felt yourself reliving your past traumas, or doubting the validity of your own experiences, the editorial board at *The Blue Banner* hears you and we are angry too. We stand with you against those who try to discredit you because we believe you.

The conversation does not stop here. This week's issue contains several articles about sexual assault, accompanied by trigger warnings if you are not quite ready to re-engage with such material. And it is okay if you need to take time to care for yourself, it does not make you weak in the face of this evil.

We will never stop writing for you and we will be here when you get back.

According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, calls to their national sexual assault hotline increased 147 percent above normal volume during the hearing. The staff of the Me Too Movement, headed by Tarana Burke, released a statement to Ford titled "A Love Letter to Dr. Christine Blasey Ford," which provides the option to digitally sign the public letter.

Ford's hearing did not persuade the opinions of voting Senate members, but it did solidify one thing: the support to Ford remains strong in the hands of fellow survivors of sexual violence, identifying and uniting them, now more than ever.

To send a note of gratitude or support to Ford:
Dr. Christine Blasey Ford
c/o Palo Alto University
1791 Arastradero Rd.
Palo Alto, CA 94304