

BFT Emergency Resolution:

We Believe Christine Blasey Ford and Deborah Ramirez We Stand By Them

Oppose Kavanaugh's Nomination to the Supreme Court

Whereas,

At the July 2018 American Federation of Teachers (AFT) convention, delegates voted unanimously for a resolution that placed the AFT in unequivocal opposition to the approval of Brett Kavanaugh to the US Supreme Court. Doing so, the AFT came out ahead of those who would otherwise seek to make Trump's nomination of Kavanaugh into a mere talking point for the November 2018 mid-term elections. Our national union came out with a commitment to stopping this impending catastrophe to American democracy.

Since then, millions of Americans and defenders of democracy across the globe owe our thanks to Dr. Christine Blasey Ford for her courage to come forward with the truth of Brett Kavanaugh's heinous sexual assault on her. Dr. Ford is a Bay Area educator whose contributions to education and the field of psychology are highly respected. Her courage has inspired other women, including Yale graduate Deborah Ramirez, and possibly others, to come forward with their own harrowing experiences surviving sexual assault by Kavanaugh.

We believe and stand by these brave women. Publicly revealing one's experience with sexual violence: harassment, stalking, assault, or rape is never an easy decision to make, and even more painful to report with the public scrutiny and backlash that inevitably follows—especially in this highest profile of cases.

These reports of Kavanaugh's heinous attacks warrant the defeat his removal as a candidate to the US Supreme Court. No man has a right to violate, sexually assault, or rape a woman, much less a future Supreme Court Justice. In the words of Blasey Ford's husband, Russell Ford, "I think you look to judges to be the arbiters of right and wrong. If they don't have a moral code of their own to determine right from wrong, then that's a problem. So I think it's relevant. Supreme Court nominees should be held to a higher standard" (Washington Post, 9/16/18).

Kavanaugh has a longstanding record of hostility to American democracy. Over 2 decades, he has supported unimpeded and authoritarian presidential powers. He wrote repeatedly that he believes a sitting president should not even be investigated, much less indicted—fitting squarely with Trump's own views that he should be above the law. It is why Trump nominated him.

Adding Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court would give Trump *carte blanche* to make further attacks on the gains of the labor movement and public education, continue his policies of tearing immigrant children from the arms of their families and imprisoning them in concentration camps, and continuing his attacks on black, Latina/o, Arab, Muslim, Asian, Native American, and LGBTQ people. There is no

question that Kavanaugh would undermine or eradicate protections of a woman's right to choose what happens to her body. Access to abortion, legal protections against rape and sexual assault, equal rights in the workplace and campus, all would be under attack from a court on which Kavanaugh consolidates a conservative, sexist, racist, and anti-democratic majority.

It is already clear from this history that a Trump-majority U.S. Supreme Court would see no problem in overturning precedent, including most obviously the long-established precedent in *Roe v Wade* (1973) and the recent precedent in the Marriage Equality decision (2015). A Supreme Court that is joined by one more Trump-appointed judge would combine with four judges who have already indicated their support for an almost absolutist conception of Presidential authority. The road would then be clear to Trump to take any range of actions against the Mueller investigation, as well as any broad range of violations of human rights that he decides to carry out at the border against America's immigrant communities.

Now more than ever, as our nation stands at a crossroads, the Resistance movement to Trump must rise to the occasion and make our voices heard. The future of freedom and democracy in the US, already in too short supply, must be defended; Kavanaugh's nomination must be defeated.

Therefore Be It Resolved That:

- 1. The Berkeley Federation of Teachers (BFT) stands wholeheartedly in support of fellow educator Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, Deborah Ramirez, and other women who valiantly come forward to tell the truth about sexual violations they suffered at the hands of Brett Kavanaugh. We believe them.**
- 2. The BFT vigorously calls for the defeat of Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the US Supreme Court.**
- 3. The BFT supports the demands of Senate Judiciary Committee members who are calling for a delay of the Senate vote on Kavanaugh and joins those demanding Kavanaugh withdraw his nomination.**

Submitted by: Yvette Felarca, MLK Site Rep, EON/BAMN Caucus