

October 29, 2018

Dear Members of the New Jersey Legislature,

We proudly stand in solidarity with Katie Brennan, Sylvia Jauregui and our sister survivors and thank them for their tremendous courage under circumstances no one should ever face. By sharing their story, Katie, Sylvia and the unnamed woman who decided to come forward have shown incredible determination and commitment to the pursuit of justice for themselves and other sexual assault survivors.

In the past year -- thanks to the brave individuals who have spoken out as part of the #MeToo movement -- it has become clear how far we are as a nation from providing justice for survivors of sexual assault and harassment. We can do better and we must do better.

Earlier this month the Murphy administration acknowledged that our current approach to these allegations is unacceptable. We know that for survivors to feel heard, there must be changes in the way cases are handled, from reporting to accountability. All those responsible must own their responsibility, if we are to raise survivors and their voices and move towards greater justice in New Jersey.

We believe that an independent investigation and review are meaningful first steps. These should be focused on supporting survivors and not made spectacles for public consumption. We support the decision to have the offices of the Attorney General and Equal Employment Opportunity do complete evaluations of laws, policies and regulations surrounding these cases. We stand united in a demand that this investigation be thorough and free of political influence, and stand prepared to hold the administration accountable otherwise.

Ultimately, we must make sure that these investigations lead to real change. When the findings are released, we are committed to working together to ensure Governor Murphy, the Administration and the Legislature establish necessary progressive policy changes that lead towards more aggressive prosecution of perpetrators, provide additional trauma training for police officers, prosecutors and judges as well as eliminate arbitrary time limitations that deny victims justice.

By working together, we can accomplish our goals and make it known that these circumstances will never again be tolerated in the state of New Jersey. Sexual assault survivors must be able to seek and receive justice.

We hope the investigation and future policy recommendations will proceed in a collaborative way that does not politicize the process. We must focus our efforts to further the goal of creating better systems and structures in New Jersey for survivors of sexual assault. We owe this to Katie, Sylvia and all the women like them who have been impacted by sexual assault or harassment, not only while engaged in all three branches of a traditionally male dominated government, but also those harmed in private

employment, in education, in recreation, and in all walks of life. We need to develop a system of reporting and action that works for them in the pursuit of justice in the future.

Despite great strides made by the Murphy administration and the legislature on behalf of women, much must clearly change. Our collective call is that political machinations not hinder the opportunity to effect real change for all the people of New Jersey.

Sincerely,

Aida L. Figueroa-Epifanio, Institute Co-Chair and Executive Board Member, New Leaders Council-NJ

Alisa Smith, Community Baptist Church, Englewood

Alison Arne, Action Together NJ, Atlantic County

Amy Quinn, Deputy Mayor, City of Asbury Park

Analilia Mejia, Executive Director, New Jersey Working Families Alliance

Andrea Long, Donor Relations Manager, ACLU of New Jersey

Anne Gunderson

Ashley Bennett, Freeholder, Atlantic County

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Carol E. Gay, President, NJ Industrial Union Council

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