

Democrats push second round of sexual assault allegations against Kavanaugh

Eric London
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The Democratic Party escalated its efforts to delay the confirmation of President Trump's Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh after Ronan Farrow and Jane Mayer published new allegations of sexual assault against the circuit court judge in the *New Yorker* on Sunday night.

The new accusation, following allegations against Kavanaugh by Christine Blasey Ford, has been made by Deborah Ramirez, who asserts that Kavanaugh thrust his genitals at her face during a party when the two were in college in the early 1980s.

There are indications that the publication of the second set of accusations has backfired on the Democrats. Farrow and Mayer's reporting has been subject to widespread criticism and handled with an unusual degree of skepticism by the national evening news programs.

In a statement from the Senate floor, Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced that the *New York Times* refused to publish Ramirez's allegation. A *Times* article yesterday included the following paragraph about the accusation:

"The Times had interviewed several dozen people over the past week in an attempt to corroborate her story, and could find no one with firsthand knowledge. Ms. Ramirez herself contacted former Yale classmates asking if they recalled the incident and told some of them that she could not be certain Mr. Kavanaugh was the one who exposed himself."

The Republicans and the Trump administration have capitalized on skepticism over the second allegation to call for a rapid vote to confirm the arch-reactionary judge. In another demonstration of the degraded level of bourgeois politics in America, Kavanaugh appeared on Fox News last night to declare that he was a virgin at the time of his alleged sexual offenses.

"I did not have sexual intercourse or anything close to sexual intercourse in high school or for many years thereafter," he said, while denying Ramirez's accusation

as well as the allegation leveled by California professor Blasey Ford.

Democrats have stated that they reject Kavanaugh's denials and are calling for an FBI investigation into both allegations. Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal told the *Hill*, "Why has Brett Kavanaugh not called for [an FBI investigation]? The survivors of these sexual assaults have called for an FBI investigation—that speaks volumes to their credibility and the failure of the White House and Brett Kavanaugh to ask for that kind of investigation also speaks to lack of credibility."

The Democrats are increasingly adopting as their party line the assertion that they believe the allegations by Ford and Ramirez are true, despite the lack of any investigation to establish on the basis of facts and evidence whether the two women or Kavanaugh are telling the truth.

On Sunday, Washington state Senator Patty Murray said on the "Meet the Press" interview program that the "presumption of innocence" should be applied to presume that the women are being truthful and Kavanaugh is lying. This turns on its head the democratic principle that the presumption of innocence must be given to the accused and the burden of proof placed on the accuser.

On Monday, Senator Chris Coons (Democrat from Delaware) told CNN, "I believe both women." He then proceeded to call for a "full investigation," despite having all but declared Kavanaugh guilty as charged.

The Democrats have leapt on the allegations in an effort to transform Kavanaugh's confirmation vote into a referendum on sexual assault and portray the Republicans as defenders of rape and sexual abuse. They hope thereby to bolster their chances in the midterm elections less than six weeks away.

The *New York Times* reported Monday, "With Judge Kavanaugh and his accuser, Christine Blasey Ford, scheduled to testify this week before the Senate Judiciary Committee, and many women furious over President

Trump's attacks on Dr. Blasey, a Supreme Court nomination that was once seen as a political winner in many conservative-leaning states could, instead, rouse female voters and independents who otherwise may have cared little about the confirmation fight."

The *Times* went on to note that "suburban women are pivotal in this year's campaign," and that Republicans "risk inviting an even greater backlash at the ballot box" if they are "too harsh in their questioning of Dr. Blasey," an issue the newspaper calls "political dynamite" and beneficial to the Democrats.

In an effort to provide a popular veneer to their efforts, the Democrats called for protests on Monday to oppose Kavanaugh's confirmation. There was only the most negligible response. Several dozen people, including law students from Kavanaugh's alma mater, Yale, participated in a protest in Washington D.C., and a number of Hollywood actresses posted photographs on social media.

The Democratic Party's operation against Kavanaugh has drowned out any discussion of the judge's pro-corporate, pro-torture, pro-war record.

Yesterday, Amnesty International published an open letter to senators stating the organization "believes that the vetting of Brett Kavanaugh's record on human rights has been insufficient." The letter demands "any information relevant to Kavanaugh's possible involvement in human rights violations—including in relation to the US government's use of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, such as during the CIA detention program."

This letter fell on deaf ears and went unreported in the corporate press.

While less than a third of registered voters support Kavanaugh's confirmation, the Democrats' campaign on alleged sexual assault has not evoked any significant popular support. According to a recent national poll by Fox News, just 36 percent of registered voters believe the allegations by Christine Blasey Ford, while 30 percent believe Kavanaugh's denial. Over a third—34 percent—say they do not know which side to believe.

Of all the issues voters are following in the run-up to the midterm elections, Brett Kavanaugh's nomination and the allegation of Russian interference in the US election are two of the least important. In contrast to the divisions over Kavanaugh, a clear majority of voters are hostile to Trump's record on immigration and health care. Wages and economic hardship remain a particular concern to working class voters.

The real mood among masses of working people was characterized in the first lines of a *New York Times* op-ed published yesterday by an AFL-CIO leader: "When we asked 4,035 working class voters in battleground races to name an elected official who was fighting for them, the top response was not a Republican or a Democrat. It was 'no one.'"

Groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) are playing a key role in seeking to divert the growing mood of social opposition by tying it to the Democratic Party's campaign on sexual assault. In an editorial board statement titled, "She speaks for us and we'll stand with her," *Socialist Worker* makes no reference to Kavanaugh's right-wing political history, but calls for readers to support the Democratic Party's sex abuse allegations against him.

Making clear its support for the Democrats, the ISO frets that a Democratic-controlled Congress "might be able to obstruct further Republican proposals, but it would face major obstacles in undoing the damage that the administration and its Republican allies have done legislatively." The editorial bemoans that fact that "even with a Democratic victory, the next Congress won't take office until four long months from now."

What is involved is a right-wing operation to (1) bolster the Democrats' election campaign, (2) silence left-wing criticism of Kavanaugh and (3) undercut the democratic right to the presumption of innocence—a right that is most essential to the oppressed, including immigrants and the millions of impoverished people languishing in jails and prisons across the US.



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