

Kavanaugh Sworn into the Supreme Court

Despite Backlash in Light of Sexual Assault Claims

Now-Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh has recently been dealing with an influx of sexual harassment and assault allegations from various women, as well as American citizens' very mixed reactions to these allegations. In July, 2018, United States President Donald Trump nominated Kavanaugh to replace recently retired Justice Anthony Kennedy on the Supreme Court of the United States and immediately many conservatives were excited; however, this excitement declined somewhat once allegations of sexual assault dating back to Kavanaugh's college and even high school years were released to the public.

The first allegation came from Christine Blasey Ford, who claimed that Kavanaugh and a friend of his, Mark Judge, both extremely intoxicated by alcohol, forced her into a bedroom during a party. Ford testified that while Judge watched, Kavanaugh aggressively and forcefully pinned her to a bed in the private home at which the party allegedly took place. She then said that Kavanaugh proceeded to grope her over her clothes, as he pressed his body against hers and tried to remove her clothing. Ford says that she tried to scream, but that her attacker put his hand over her mouth. She eventually escaped Kavanaugh's manual bonds as Judge jumped on them then fell onto the floor. Ford claimed that she was fifteen at the time, while Kavanaugh was seventeen. Recently, her lawyers released a copy of a lie-detector test which she took on the seventh of August. The results showed that she was being truthful.

The second allegation came from a woman by the name of Deborah Ramirez, who said that she had gone to school with Kavanaugh at Yale University, and was assaulted by him at a dormitory party thirty-five years ago. According to Ramirez, Kavanaugh exposed himself, then

proceeded to shove his penis in her face, causing her to come in direct contact with his genitalia as she tried to push him away. While she admitted to being under the influence herself at the time, she claims to specifically remember someone shouting, “Brett Kavanaugh just put his penis in Debbie’s face.” She explained that she had remained silent because she partially blamed herself for getting too drunk. Following the allegation, Kavanaugh denied all of Ramirez’s claims, and several people who knew Kavanaugh or both of them admitted that they were not surprised by the allegation seeing as Kavanaugh was a heavy drinker and partyer in both high school and college.

The third main allegation came from Julie Swetnick, who claimed that she had seen Kavanaugh drinking excessively at house parties and taking part in “abusive and physically aggressive behavior toward girls” around the early eighties. Swetnick went on to allege that Kavanaugh, among other young men, would get girls drunk so they could then be gang-raped in small rooms at house parties by numerous boys. Swetnick added that she recalled seeing Judge at several of these events and taking part in the sexual abuse as well.” In addition to all of these claims, she said that in the year 1982, she was a victim of one of these gang rapes at which Kavanaugh was present; however, she did not explicitly say that he participated, and she did not give any details regarding the location of this assault. Like the other allegations, Kavanaugh denied every detail of Swetnick’s report, and went so far as to say her recollection of events was like something out of “The Twilight Zone.”

Following the release of these claims, the FBI announced that they would be carrying out an investigation of Kavanaugh and his alleged sexual misconduct; however, many were disappointed when the FBI ended up interviewing only nine witnesses. Officials told the public

that the FBI also contacted a tenth anonymous witness, but there was no proof that a full-length interview of this witness was carried out. The FBI neglected to interview Kavanaugh or Ford, which angered many and led to rumours that the supposed investigation was merely a cover-up. Republicans argued that because they both testified in court before the committee very recently, there was no need for additional interviews. People also expressed frustration at the discovery that the FBI failed to interview Swetnick. Nevertheless, Brett Kavanaugh was sworn in as the 114th Supreme Court justice on Saturday, October 6, 2018.

In a private ceremony held on the sixth of October, not long after the Senate voted to confirm Kavanaugh in the second-closest vote in history, Kavanaugh was sworn in, helping to solidify right-wing control of the Supreme Court. The final vote came out to 50-48. With the midterm elections approaching, many are wondering how this will affect voter turnout, as well as how people may vote. Some have argued that Democrats will be angry, and will be more encouraged to participate in the election than usual, especially considering all three of the branches of the American government are currently overrun by conservatives. Others argue that Republicans will be the ones motivated by Kavanaugh's victory, and will see it as motivation to keep all three branches in Republican control. While some may celebrate, to others, Kavanaugh's win is a loss for women, survivors of sexual abuse, and advocates of gender equality in America.