

My name is Caroline Heldman and I am the Chair of the Politics Department at Occidental College. In the past six years, my heart has been broken again and again with from with students who have reported to me that they have been raped by fellow students. I am proud to stand here today in support of these brave young women who have come forward to break the culture of silence that surrounds sexual assault. One-in-four women face a sexual assault at college, and women are more likely to be raped if they go to college than if they do not. Also, 6% of men on college campuses are rape survivors.

Many of the young women here today, like too many others on college campuses across the county, have been betrayed by an institution that failed to keep them safe, and betrayed them once again when they reported what happened to them to College administrators. Some students were discouraged from filing a formal complaint, while others were not informed of their rights and were treated unfairly during the process. In some cases, the college chose to let perpetrators back on campus after they had been responsible for non-consensual sexual intercourse.

I stand with all the daughters and sons who are victimized by predators on college campuses who hide in plain sight, and I applaud these young women for their strength and courage to come forward today so that their little sisters and brothers can have a safe and truly equitable learning experience in college. Thank you.