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Statement of Karena Virginia

After Donald Trump was caught on tape bragging about groping women, a number of women came forward to share their experiences. I am here today to add my voice to that of the other Trump accusers.

I am here to stand up to Mr. Trump for myself, my family, particularly my daughter, and all the women who deserve to be respected and not subjected to sexual abuse or groped by powerful men who believe that women can be groped, grabbed, or kissed at their pleasure.

I am also here to support the other women who had the courage to come forward, only to be labeled as liars by Mr. Trump. No one has asked me to come forward. In fact, many people advised me not to speak publicly about what Donald Trump did to me out of concern that I would also be attacked by him. I have been advised that Mr. Trump will probably call me a liar just as he has called all the other women liars who have made accusations against him, or perhaps he will just label me as another "nasty woman".

I have lost sleep over this. I have been fearful about bringing unwanted attention to me and my loving family, which includes my husband, daughter and son, but, in the end I feel that it is my duty as a woman, a mother, a human being and an American citizen to speak out and tell the truth about what happened to me.

In 1998 I was at the U.S. Open tennis tournament in Flushing, Queens, New York. I was waiting for a car to arrive to take me home. As I was waiting, Donald Trump approached me. I knew who he was but I had never met him. He was with a few other men. I was surprised when I overheard him talking to the other men about me. He said "hey look at this one, we haven't seen her before, look at those legs" as though I was an object rather than a person. He then walked up to me and reached out his right arm and grabbed my right arm. Then his hand touched the right side of my breast.

I was in shock.

I flinched. He said: "Don't you know who I am?" I felt intimidated and powerless. I said "yes."

Then my car pulled up and I got in. After I closed the door, my shock turned to shame. I felt ashamed that I was wearing a short dress and heels. That feeling of shame stayed with me for a while. And it made me disinclined to wear short dresses or high heels. For a number of years afterwards I struggled with what to wear so as not to attract unwanted attention. I can remember one evening discussing this with my husband when he asked me why I did not enjoy dress shopping, and why I would often wear a shawl at a dinner party or wear a longer dress. I had made my husband aware of what Mr. Trump had done to me. It was difficult for him to understand why I would ever blame myself for being violated.

About five years ago, I saw Mr. Trump once again, this time in a business setting with many other people around. He looked me up and down a few times in a lecherous manner. This time, mixed in with the feelings of shame, I felt disgust towards him because I had come to the realization that I was the victim and he had violated me when he groped me years earlier. I now understood that I was not to blame.

Mr. Trump, perhaps you do not remember me or what you did to me so many years ago. But, I can assure you that I remember you and what you did to me as though it was yesterday. Your random moment of sexual pleasure came at my expense and affected me greatly.

Mr. Trump revealed his true character in his own words on tape which indicated that he felt entitled to grab women by their private parts. We should, to paraphrase Maya Angelou, believe him. He should be ashamed not only of his words, but of his behavior towards so many women.

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