



***On Believing Survivors and Accountability of Elected Officials:
NCCASA Statement on the Alabama Senate Election and the NC General
Assembly***

December 14, 2017

Over the past month, more people who hold positions of power have been held publicly accountable for sexual violence and harassment than ever before. Executives are being fired or pressured to resign, film releases and television shows are being cancelled, and elected officials are stepping down. Earlier this week, the voters of Alabama elected Doug Jones to the Senate, after multiple women came forward with accounts of having been sexually assaulted when they were teenagers by his opponent and the favored candidate, Roy Moore. **The Alabama Senate election is a powerful statement that we will no longer tolerate and ignore sexual violence from those who represent us as elected officials.**

In addition to the allegations of sexual violence, Moore also has a track record of backing policies and making statements that dehumanize and threaten the rights and safety of immigrants, people who are LGBTQ+, and people of color. We cannot end sexual violence without ending oppression of all forms, and as the voters in Alabama have this week, we must also take a stand against words and actions such as these from those in positions of power.

The shift we are seeing in believing and supporting survivors and holding people accountable for sexual violence is a welcome and important step. However, to be clear, while some elected officials have stepped down or lost elections, there are many more elected officials who remain in power in spite of multiple credible allegations of sexual violence against them. **The election in Alabama was not a landslide, and it was Black voters, specifically Black women, who overwhelmingly influenced the election results.** Survivors who have bravely come forward continue to experience public attempts to discredit and shame them.

Today, WUNC aired a story¹ after conducting interviews with three dozen current and former lawmakers, lobbyists, staffers, interns and journalists about what some

¹ Tiberii, J. (2017, December 14.) Does A 'Good Ol' Boy' Culture Pervade The North Carolina General Assembly? *WUNC*. Retrieved from <http://wunc.org/post/does-good-ol-boy-culture-pervade-north-carolina-general-assembly#stream/0>



described as a culture of sexual harassment at the North Carolina General Assembly. In the words of one former and one current lobbyist:

“What I found was a group of men who were sort of unashamed in flexing their power with me, and crossing boundaries with me, and putting me into situations that were hostile and sometimes even threatening.”

“It feels like the people think they have a right to my body and my space. A lot of touching on my back and my shoulder. They think they have access to my body.”

While there have been no recent official sexual harassment complaints on record in the NC General Assembly, the WUNC report also raises questions about the effectiveness of the sexual harassment reporting procedures currently in place.

NCCASA is committed to holding elected officials and legislative bodies in North Carolina accountable for instances of sexual harassment and for policies that enable a culture of sexual violence to exist. We believe that North Carolina voters, like Alabama voters, will not tolerate or ignore sexual violence and harassment from the elected officials who they choose to represent them. We are committed to pushing forward the momentum of #MeToo, powered by the courage of survivors who persist in telling their stories. We are committed to believing, supporting, and following the lead of survivors, as theirs are the voices who will continue to carry this movement forward and change our culture. We are committed to ending sexual violence.