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P R O C E E D I N G

OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS OF COMMISSIONERS

THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning. We will now convene the fifth public hearing of the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission. This particular hearing will focus on the issues of the reporting, the investigation, and the prosecution of prison rape cases and what needs to be done to make those efforts successful.

I would first like to thank the chief judge of this Court, Chief Judge Bernard Freedman for permitting us to use this facility. And, obviously, we appreciate that graciousness.

The National Prison Rape Elimination Commission, for those who are not familiar with the commission, was created by the 2003 Prison Rape Elimination Act. The act was created by an act of Congress and signed off by the President.

Our responsibility as commissioners is to study the issue of prison rape and to ultimately report to Congress and the President our findings, and to make recommendations to those who propose

1 standards that are national standards. We will be  
2 holding public hearings probably for the next year  
3 or so throughout the country assessing various  
4 aspects of the problem of prison rape with the hope  
5 that we will be able to ultimately have a profound  
6 impact on the incidence on prison rape.

7 I think as a nation we have a proud history,  
8 but we obviously have to appreciate that this is  
9 the problem that exist in America and a problem  
10 that America will not tolerate.

11 I would first like to introduce the  
12 commissioners, at least have them introduce  
13 themselves. There are two commissioners who,  
14 unfortunately, can not be here. One is Mr. Pat  
15 Nolan, who is the president of the Justice  
16 Fellowship, which is a policy mark of Chuck  
17 Colson's Prison Fellowship Ministries. And the  
18 second individual who could not be here is Gus  
19 Puryear, who is executive vice president, general  
20 counsel, and secretary of the Corrections  
21 Corporation of America.

22 We'll start on my far right and I'll have my

1           fellow commissioners introduce themselves.

2                       COMMISSIONER FELLNER: Good morning. I'm  
3           Jamie Fellner, commissioner obviously on the  
4           Commission. And in my day job I am the director of  
5           the U.S. Program Human Rights Watch.

6                       COMMISSIONER STRUCKMAN-JOHNSON: Good  
7           morning. I am Professor Cindy Struckman-Johnson  
8           and I teach psychology at the University of South  
9           Dakota. My background is in conducting research on  
10          prison rape.

11                      COMMISSIONER AIKEN: Good morning. My  
12          name is James Aiken. I'm the president of James E.  
13          Aiken & Associates, a prison consulting firm.

14                      COMMISSIONER KANEB: John Kaneb. I'm  
15          from the Boston area and I'm in private business.

16                      COMMISSIONER SMITH: Good morning. My  
17          name is Brenda Smith. I'm a professor at American  
18          University, Washington College of Law.

19                      THE CHAIRMAN: And I am Reggie Walton.  
20          I'm the chairman of the commission. I also serve  
21          as United States district judge in Washington, D.C.

22                      Our first panel are two survivors of prison

1 rape and I'd ask the two of you to identify  
2 yourselves in turn and please present your  
3 statements to us.

4 We welcome you and we thank you for your  
5 willingness to appear and make public statements on  
6 this issue.

7 I'm sorry, we need to swear you in. Would you  
8 stand?

9 SURVIVOR TESTIMONY

10 (Survivor members sworn.)

11 MS. RAGSDALE: Good morning. My name is  
12 Dana Ragsdale and I am pleased to be here this  
13 morning. I want to thank you for giving me the  
14 opportunity to share my story with you.

15 My experience is different because I was not  
16 sexually assaulted while in prison. Instead, I was  
17 a survivor of sexual abuse prior to entering  
18 prison, and I reported to prison staff person for  
19 sexual misconduct. Apparently, I was not taken  
20 seriously because a number of women were assaulted  
21 by this corrections officer long after the report  
22 was made. I hope that my experience dealing with