

Community Comment Scary Time: October 11, 2018 Mike Goldsby

President Trump said it is a very scary time for boys and young men in America. He sees false accusations of sexual assault as a huge threat. He admits this is influenced by his experiences with the large number of accusations against him.

So far, 22 women have accused Trump of sexual misconduct, going back decades. He has dismissed all 22 of these as politically motivated or financially motivated. Trump also denied some of those assault accusations by saying the women were not attractive enough for him to assault.

Most of the women came forward after the release of the Hollywood Access tape in 2016, when Trump bragged about grabbing women. It is probably his most well-known quote.

According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 1 in 5 women will be raped in their lifetime and one out of 71 men will be raped. Sexual assault also includes unwanted sexual advances, groping, coercion, and aggressive sexual harassment.

Most of us know someone who has been sexually assaulted. And chances are that person is female.

How many of us know someone who has been falsely accused of sexual assault? That is an awful situation but statistically it happens way, way less often. The FBI states that 8% of the formal rape accusations that they investigate turn out to be false. That is little condolence if you are in that 8% but false accusations are not nearly as frequent as actual sexual assault.

The US Bureau of Crime Statistics estimate that two thirds of sexual assault cases are never reported, which would put the rate of false accusations at about 2%. The rate of false accusations against black men is higher than the rate against white men.

Why would a woman not report sexual assault? There are a lot of cultural influences against women who report it.

Let's imagine your house was burglarized and you reported it. First off, you are probably reporting that for financial gain. Secondly, what kind of person would let burglars run around their house? Did you have a nice house or nice possessions? Well, you are practically asking to be burglarized. Were you drunk or high when your house was burglarized? That's asking for it. Why did you wait to report it? Or, why are you so anxious to report it. Something about your report seems suspicious.

Is there a witness that can substantiate your burglary? What? You really can't prove it if nobody saw it. I digress.

It takes a lot of bravery and courage to report a sexual assault. If we want to eliminate false accusations, we need to support accurate reporting. And the best way to lower the incidence of sexual assault is to not blame the victims.

Trump is suspicious of the whole MeToo Movement. He says it is a scary time. I agree. It is a scary time for men who commit sexual assault.

This is Mike Goldsby for Community Comment.