On a crisp fall day in Providence, Thayer Street bustled with the late afternoon crowd, a line of food trucks attracting hungry residents from across the city. Amongst the patrons, talk turned to what was riveting much of America: allegations by Dr. Christine Blasey Ford of sexual assault by Supreme Court Nominee Brett Kavanaugh. A few were willing to share their opinions about Kavanaugh and the allegations, although about a third of people declined an interview because they knew little or nothing about the issues.

“[The Republicans] don’t argue about whether or not he did it, they just argue about how [the Democrats] are blackballing him to slow down the political process,” said Keveon Gomera, a twenty-five-year-old law student. Gomera expressed he believes Dr. Ford, especially considering the polygraph test she took and the trend of accusations of various kinds surrounding Trump’s circle of close contacts. “As a younger male, it’s definitely interesting seeing these gentlemen that are older having this stuff come up to surface because I’d like to be a public
servant one day and I could imagine having something from my past come back up and bite me...but I couldn’t imagine something like that,” he explained.

When asked about what should happen after the hearing, Gomera called for Kavanaugh to withdraw from the nomination process. “People are so used to making excuses for their alcohol behavior...allowing alcohol to bring certain latent feelings to the surface,” he said. “If it’s the case that he did this, they should have known about it. And if they didn’t know about it and it’s smacking them in the face now, then that’s their problem and it’s his job to resign now that it’s been brought to light.”

Similarly, Kaitlin Bishop, a thirty-year-old special education teacher, said, “I think [Kavanaugh] is a horrible human being and I don’t think he should be trusted.” She wasn’t sure of the outcome of the hearing at the time of her interview, but she claimed, “I don’t think that he should be a candidate [for the Supreme Court] at all,” and also believed that an investigation into the allegations is in order.

Forty-seven-year-old Dougie, who asked that his last name not be used, described his perspective with a metaphor: “If you got a parking ticket three years ago and never paid the fine, that doesn’t mean you get off the hook for paying it.” The food truck event organizer went on to explain the consequences that may result if Kavanaugh is confirmed to the Supreme Court. “If this happens, it shows that anybody can get away with anything they want,” he warned. Although Dougie did not explicitly state what he wanted Congress to do about the nomination, he mentioned that he believed Dr. Ford and the other women who have come forward.

Frances Imarhia, a seventeen-year-old Brown student studying biomedical engineering, expressed that she does not think sexual assault can be categorized as “a teenage mistake” and
that the consequences follow the victims for their entire lives. “Being a Supreme Court Justice is not just a position of power, it’s a privilege. So even allegations of something that serious should be taken into consideration when you’re being considered for a position like that.” Like many other interviewees, Imarhia sided with Dr. Ford and the other accusers and thought an investigation of the allegations is necessary before the Senate can make a fully informed decision on Kavanaugh’s eligibility.

Matt Caspari praised Dr. Ford, stating, “I thought Christine Blasey Ford did an amazing job today and that Kavanagh was way too belligerent.” The sixty-year-old ad writer went on to support Dr. Ford and denounce Kavanaugh, explaining, “I feel like she’s telling the truth and it’s pretty clear from all the evidence that at the very least he was a heavy drinker in his high school years, which he’s not owning up to. Hence, no integrity. Hence, let’s get somebody better.”

“There certainly has to be an investigation, and I think that’s what you’re going to see in the next couple of days. I’d be astonished if it doesn’t happen,” Caspari continued. “I’d also be astonished if the Republicans don’t cut him loose after a while because they don’t have time to wait.”

It turns out that many of the interviewees predicted the Senate’s actions correctly. Since Thursday’s hearing, the judiciary committee, comprised of eleven Republican Senators and ten Democratic Senators, has decided to allow the Federal Bureau of Investigation one week to investigate the allegations of sexual assault against Kavanaugh; however, even that probe is under intense scrutiny. Citizens and government officials alike are questioning whether the White House, and Trump specifically, is making the focus of the investigation too narrow by only looking at the sexual assault claims and not the repeated mentions of Kavanaugh’s heavy
drinking, particularly during his high school and college years. Only time will tell what the next step in this process will be.