

# Kavanaugh willing to talk, arrives at White House

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*Associated Press*

appropriate to refute this false allegation, from 36 years ago, and defend my integrity," Kavanaugh said.

Kavanaugh, meanwhile, was seen arriving at the White House late this morning. There was no immediate explanation of the reason for his visit.

He had been on a smooth confirmation track, but the new allegations have roiled that process. Republican senators have expressed concern over a woman's private-turned-public allegation that a drunken Kavanaugh groped her and tried to take off her clothes at a party when they were teenagers.

Debra S. Katz, the attorney for the woman, Christine Blasey Ford, said her client con-

sidered the incident to be an attempted rape.

"She believes that if were not for the severe intoxication of Brett Kavanaugh, she would have been raped," Katz told NBC's "Today."

Kavanaugh, 53, "categorically and unequivocally" denied the allegations when they came out anonymously last week.

"This has not changed," White House spokesman Kerri Kupec said today. "Judge Kavanaugh and the White House both stand by that statement."

Still, White House counselor Kellyanne Conway said of Ford: "She should not be insulted. She should not be ignored. She should testify under oath and she should do

it on Capitol Hill."

Conway, who said she had discussed the situation with President Donald Trump, said that both Ford and Kavanaugh should testify, but made clear it was up to the Judiciary Committee. She said Sen. Lindsey Graham had told her it could happen as soon as Tuesday and the White House will "respect the process."

Stressing that Kavanaugh had already testified and undergone FBI background checks, Conway said: "I think you have to weigh this testimonial evidence from Dr. Ford and Judge Kavanaugh along with the considerable body of evidence that is already there about the judge's temperament and qualifications and character."

In morning television interviews, Katz said her client

was willing to tell her story in public to the Judiciary panel, although no lawmakers or their aides had yet contacted her. Katz also denied that Ford, a Democrat, is politically motivated.

"No one in their right mind regardless of their motives would want to inject themselves into this process and face the kind of violation that she will be subjected to by those who want this nominee to go through. ... She was quite reluctant to come forward."

Initially the sexual misconduct allegation was conveyed in a private letter, without revealing Ford's name. With a name and disturbing details, the accusation raised the prospect of congressional Republicans defending Trump's nominee ahead of midterm elections featuring an unprece-

dent number of female candidates and informed in part by the #MeToo movement.

Ford told the Post that Kavanaugh pinned her to a bed at a Maryland party in the early 1980s, clumsily tried to remove her clothing and put his hand over her mouth when she tried to scream.

She said Kavanaugh and a friend — both "stumbling drunk," she says — corralled her in a bedroom when she was around 15 and Kavanaugh was around 17. She says Kavanaugh groped her over her clothes, grinded his body against hers and tried to take off her one-piece swimsuit and the outfit she wore over it. Kavanaugh covered her mouth with his hand when she tried to scream, she says, and escaped when the friend, Mark Judge, jumped on them.

## Bridge: 'Oregon's pretty aggressive on taking care of their structures'

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Burgess & Niple, an Ohio-based architecture and engineering firm, adopted the rope technique more than 30 years ago and has used it to inspect the Astoria Bridge since the 1990s. The through-truss bridge spans more than 4 miles and towers nearly 200 feet above the river.

"It's not always finding new things. It's sometimes just checking to see if the old things have changed drastically," said Ben Barkan, an engineer.

While this year's report is not complete, the previous look at the Astoria Bridge in 2016, which cost the state more than \$250,000, noted some recommendations for routine maintenance but no critical issues. Some minor deformations and rusting were noted, and a few steel beam anchor bolts were missing.

"I am not afraid at all to drive across that structure," said Dale Poorman, an engineer.

Oregon is one of the top 10 states in the country in terms of

keeping up with bridge inspections, Poorman said. Other bridges in the country have required more regular inspections due to serious issues. One bridge in Oklahoma, for instance, requires daily check-ins and is scheduled to be fully replaced.

"Oregon's pretty aggressive on taking care of their structures," Poorman said.

The federally mandated inspections began in the aftermath of the 1967 Silver Bridge collapse in West Virginia. A small defect a fraction of an inch deep into the suspension bridge caused it to fail, killing 48 people during rush-hour traffic.

The "fracture critical" inspections often involve heavy machinery that require traffic shutdowns. Since the engineers are specially trained to use ropes to access fracture critical points, it negates a number of headaches, said Bruce Johnson, state bridge engineer for the Department of Transportation.

"We would probably have to do the inspection at night.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

From left, Dale Poorman, Mike Kronander and Ben Barkan take a ride up to the Astoria Bridge to perform a routine inspection.

We could do it with lights and things like that, but it's not as good as doing it during the day," Johnson said.

Poorman has been a bridge inspector since 1985. When he first started, he tied Manila rope around his waist to keep from falling — no harnesses, lan-

yards or much else in the way of climbing gear.

"It was pretty, pretty rude climbing at that time," Poorman said. "It's come so long."

While not the windiest in Oregon, gusts on the Astoria Bridge can present challenges for the climbers.

"One of the main concerns is how much space you have between the bridge itself and the shoulder in the lane, is those ropes blowing into traffic," Kronander said.

Some steel parts the engineers use to position themselves on the Astoria Bridge

are relatively hefty. As a result, climbers have to be more careful when wrapping lanyards around them. Steel bridges can also force climbers to deal with animal habitats, including wasps, and can be slippery under certain conditions.

Of course, there's always the danger of falling. The Astoria Bridge, nearly 200 feet tall at its peak, is tall, but "anything over 30 feet is going to kill you, really, if you fall," Poorman said.

When the engineers inspected the bridge in July, a number of passers-by called 911, fearing that they were protesters, suicidal or thrill-seekers. Poorman recalls one driver in the 1990s cursing at him because he thought he was protesting a passing naval ship.

Despite the dangers and quirks, the engineers appreciate the sights and size of the decades-old bridge.

"It's one of the biggest structures I've been on," Kronander said. "It's really, really interesting and magnificent."



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