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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AT UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER, SENATOR GILLIBRAND
MEETS WITH STUDENTS AND LEADS ORGANIZING EFFORT
TO COMBAT SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES**

Gillibrand Reintroduces Strengthened Version of Campus Accountability and Safety Act With Added Input from Survivors, Students, Colleges and Universities, Law Enforcement, and Advocates

In 2013 There Were 388 Forcible Sex Offenses Reported By Campuses Across New York State According To Data From The U.S. Department of Education

Rochester, NY – At a round table meeting at the University of Rochester, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand was joined today by students and officials from University of Rochester and other area colleges, as well as survivors, advocates, and law enforcement to discuss bolstering efforts to combat sexual violence on college campuses. According to data from the U.S. Department of Education, college campuses in New York reported 388 forcible sex offenses and over 5,000 offenses nationwide in 2013.

Last week Gillibrand reintroduced a strengthened version of her bipartisan bill *The Campus Accountability and Safety Act (S.590)* after receiving input from survivors, students, colleges and universities, law enforcement, and advocates. Gillibrand's legislation would flip the current incentives of a broken system to provide real accountability and transparency from higher education institutions. The legislation would professionalize the response to and reporting of sexual assaults that occur on campuses to better protect and empower survivors of campus sexual violence, while also protecting the rights of accused students.

The legislation would secure landmark reforms for how colleges and universities address and report incidents of sexual assault that occur on their campuses. It incorporates feedback from key stakeholders to strengthen how student surveys are conducted and strengthens newly required training standards. The provisions safeguard both survivors and accused students. It extends the amount of time survivors have to file a case with the Department of Education, and sets new notification requirements for both survivors and accused students involved in the campus disciplinary process.

“Right now, some colleges and universities are more inclined to expel a student for cheating on an exam than for committing sexual assault,” **said Senator Gillibrand**. “We know this problem is pervasive and too often swept under the rug. This bipartisan bill is a

new path forward to protect students by flipping the incentives and holding schools accountable. I am grateful to the survivors and advocates whose work inspired this legislation. Our work isn't done, and now we need to work together to spotlight this problem, raise awareness, and organize around getting this bill passed so we can make our colleges safer and more transparent."

"Any case involving a sexual assault is one case too many," said **Joel Seligman, President, University of Rochester**. "At the University of Rochester, we are regularly reviewing and strengthening our educational programs, policies, and procedures to combat sexual misconduct. We all need to do everything we can to prevent sexual assaults, to encourage reporting and support victims when assaults occur, to see that our processes are prompt and fair, and to protect our campus communities from assailants. I thank Senator Gillibrand for her leadership and look forward to continuing a dialogue on this critical issue."

"Attending our colleges and universities is something to celebrate as a rite of passage and essential contribution to society, yet for 1 in 5 women college women stepping foot on campus will result in sexual assault and abuse. Abuse is never acceptable. College campuses become a home away from home. This legislation will help to provide a wakeup call of how pervasive campus assault is while ensuring our colleges are safer, held accountable and prepared to support survivors who step forward," said **Jaime Saunders, CEO of Alternatives for Battered Women**.

"As student leaders, addressing sexual assault on our campus is a priority for us because it involves everyone," said **Antoinette Esce '15, University of Rochester Students' Association President and David Stark '16, University of Rochester Student's Association Vice President**. "The elimination of sexual violence will require a cultural shift in the way we speak, act, and think. At the University of Rochester, we are proud of the work our student organizations do to spread awareness and understanding about the issue of sexual assault. We thank Senator Gillibrand for taking the time to consult survivors, students, and campuses while working on this legislation."

Key provisions of the legislation include:

- **Establishes New Campus Resources and Support Services for Student Survivors:** Colleges and universities will be required to designate Confidential Advisors to assist survivors of sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Confidential Advisors will coordinate support services and accommodations for survivors, provide information about options for reporting, and provide guidance or assistance—at the direction of the survivor—in reporting the crime to campus authorities and/or local law enforcement. Schools will no longer be allowed to sanction students who report sexual violence but reveal a non-violent student conduct violation in good faith, like underage drinking.

- **Requires Fairness in Campus Disciplinary Process:** All schools will now be required to use one uniform process for campus student disciplinary proceedings and may

no longer allow athletic departments or other subgroups to handle complaints. Schools must now provide written notification to the accused as well as the victim of any decision to move forward with a campus disciplinary proceeding within 24 hours of that decision. The notice must include details of complaint, a summary of the disciplinary proceeding and the rights and due process protections available to both parties.

- **Ensures Minimum Training Standards for On-Campus Personnel:** This legislation ensures that everyone from the Confidential Advisors to those responsible for investigating and participating in disciplinary proceedings will receive specialized training so that they have a firm understanding of the nature of these crimes and their effect on survivors.

- **Creates New Transparency Requirements:** For the first time, students at every university in America will be surveyed about their experience with sexual violence to get an accurate picture of this problem. This new biannual survey will be standardized and anonymous, with the results published online so that parents and high school students can make an informed choice when comparing universities. The Department of Education will also be required to publish the names of all schools with pending investigations, final resolutions, and voluntary resolution agreements related to Title IX with respect to sexual violence.

- **Campus Accountability and Coordination with Law Enforcement:** This legislation will require colleges and universities to enter into memoranda of understanding with each local law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction to report to a campus as a first responder to clearly delineate responsibilities and share information so that when a crime occurs, both campus authorities and local authorities can focus on solving the crime rather than debating jurisdiction.

- **Enforceable Title IX Penalties and Stiffer Penalties for Clery Act Violations:** Schools that do not comply with certain requirements under the bill may face a penalty of up to 1 percent of the institution's operating budget. Previously, the only allowable penalty was the loss of all federal student aid which is not practical and has never been done. The bill increases penalties for Clery Act violations to up to \$150,000 per violation from the current penalty of \$35,000. Financial penalties collected from universities in violation will be distributed back to campuses through a new competitive grant program, administered by the Secretary of Education, for which colleges and universities can apply for the purpose of researching best practices for preventing and responding to sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking on college campuses and sharing such research with peer institutions and the Department of Education.

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, colleges and universities have a legal obligation to provide an environment that is free from discrimination on the basis of sex in all education programs and activities. Sexual harassment, which includes sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination prohibited under Title IX.

Gillibrand introduced the bipartisan legislation Thursday along with Senators Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), Dean Heller (R-Nev.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.), Mark Warner (D-Va.), Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Shelly Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) and Gary Peters (D-MI.).

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