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1 So I'm not very hopeful about this new
2 program.

3 Rather than continue to jabber on, I think
4 I'll just pass the microphone. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN WALTON: We appreciate your
6 testimony, but what Congress does to ICE is what
7 they do to Article 3 courts also.

8 MR. BRYAN LONEGAN: Yeah. Exactly.

9 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Ms. Wideman.

10 MS. ANNE WIDEMAN: Hi. My name is Dr. Anne
11 Wideman. I'm a clinical psychologist. I live in
12 Arizona.

13 And for the past seven years I've worked as
14 a volunteer for Doctors of the World Human Rights
15 Clinic and The Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights
16 Project. And in this capacity I've met with dozens
17 of both adult and child immigrants in various
18 detention settings.

19 Additionally, I've also spent a lot of my
20 career working in prison settings, including a
21 forensic state hospital. And I have a background --
22 I have been the clinical director of a rape crisis
23 center, working with sexual trauma victims.

24 And the thing that I know is that sexual
25 violence thrives in shadows. If you look at all the

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1 places in the world where there's frequent sexual
2 violence, you'll see common denominators. The
3 perpetrators have a belief that they will not be
4 punished for what they will do or they will not
5 receive significant consequences.

6 They believe that the victim is less than
7 or unable to seek justice for themselves. And they
8 recognize that the victim does not have any outlet
9 for protest or protection and recognize that their
10 victims are vulnerable and isolated. And prisons
11 and detention settings, including for immigrants,
12 are these kinds of settings.

13 Immigrants come into detention from many
14 ways, either by committing crime -- but many of them
15 are there having committed no crime at all. And
16 there are several things I think that make them
17 particularly vulnerable to sexual violence once they
18 get into the setting.

19 One, in many immigration detention
20 settings, the population is mixed between
21 individuals seeking asylum or refugee status or to
22 avoid deportation with those individuals who have
23 committed crimes and are in the process of
24 deportation for those crimes.

25 Those who have committed crimes and served

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1 prison sentences before coming to immigration
2 detention bring with them a prison culture. This
3 includes certain principles. And one of the
4 principles is silence. Do not tell authorities what
5 has occurred, but settle it among the inmates.

6 Another is do your own time, which means to
7 not assist other inmates who are being harmed or
8 victimized. There are rules governing affiliation
9 between races and cultures.

10 And the underlying theme of prison culture
11 is that each person is responsible for him or
12 herself, for taking care of him or herself. Being
13 harmed or exploited is the responsibility of the
14 victim, not the responsibility of the perpetrator.

15 And, additionally, my observation in prison
16 settings have been that medical staff are not
17 available for or well trained in detecting or
18 following up on any kind of sexual abuse.

19 And the immigrants are poorly equipped to
20 learn this new culture. They're already often
21 struggling with language, with fear, with anxiety.
22 They've come from cultures where prison and
23 incarceration included an expectation of torture or
24 bad treatment. They have a mistrust of authority
25 and a fear of causing any kind of trouble which

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1 might hurt their case.

2 They often do not seek out or divulge abuse
3 to medical or mental health staff even if those
4 staff are available. They are vulnerable to
5 accepting abuse in silence.

6 The usual racial or ethnic affiliations
7 that help other inmates sometimes are often
8 unavailable to immigrants. Many immigrants have
9 shared with me that they don't fit into their
10 particular group in detention. Either they're too
11 home country or they're too Americanized to fit into
12 their particular group. This increases their
13 isolation and their lack of protection for violence.

14 Because they don't understand well how the
15 prison rules work, they may be easily coerced into
16 sexual behavior due to threats to their case or
17 threats to their family members.

18 Immigrants often do not understand that you
19 don't share information about your family members or
20 your financial data. And that often gets used
21 against them.

22 They're unaware of behaviors in states that
23 make them more vulnerable, isolating, and the
24 perception that their family has money or
25 connections.

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1 Immigrants are often in this country due to
2 abuse, torture, or traumatic events in their country
3 of origin. And these events may have come due to
4 war, political activity, discrimination, abuse at
5 home.

6 They suffer from diagnosable PTSD, anxiety,
7 and depressive disorders. And these disorders are
8 all different, but they carry some common
9 characteristics.

10 They include difficulties in
11 problem-solving and decision-making, hopelessness,
12 helplessness, feeling of lack of control, loss of
13 self-esteem and self-worth, and numbing or loss of
14 reaction.

15 And all of these characteristics increase
16 immigrants' vulnerability to sexual violence. They
17 become easily overwhelmed by what is happening to
18 them and have difficulty deciding on and following
19 through with a course of action to change the
20 situation.

21 They feel a lack of self-worth and come to
22 expect bad treatment and harm from others. They may
23 be so numbed and overwhelmed by prior experiences
24 that they cope with new threats and traumatization
25 by shutting down and not fighting back.

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1 Their failure to fight back might be
2 interpreted by other inmates or staff as
3 confirmation of their willingness to be further
4 victimized.

5 They may believe they have no control over
6 what is happening to them and that complaining or
7 reporting abuse won't result in any change.

8 Male immigrants share with male victims of
9 sexual violence everywhere the shame and humiliation
10 of having been victimized by another male.

11 Many male survivors of rape that I've
12 spoken with share deep humiliation of having been
13 weak or used as a punk by others. Many men never
14 share their sexual abuse due to their embarrassment
15 and their fear the assault having meant their
16 manhood is less than it was before.

17 Further, male immigrants often come from
18 cultures and backgrounds where there are strict
19 religious and cultural taboos about male-with-male
20 sexual behavior. And as victims they may view rape
21 as sexual behavior rather than the violent assault
22 that it is.

23 Immigrants in detention find themselves
24 isolated in terms of language and understanding
25 procedures and processes. They often need other

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1 inmates to translate for them, a further
2 embarrassment when discussing an assault.

3 They come from cultures, often, that view
4 officers of the government, including corrections
5 officers, as corrupt and harmful. And this makes
6 them more unlikely to report abuse or violence.

7 They quickly learn that reporting an
8 assault not only further alienates them from other
9 inmates, getting a snitch jacket, or being seen as
10 weak, but frequently results in their placement in
11 protective custody, and everyone in detention knows
12 protective custody is the worst custody to be in.

13 Sexual assault is an incredibly damaging,
14 violent act. And a common result of rape is rape
15 trauma syndrome.

16 More than 35 percent of people subjected to
17 sexual assault are severely impaired by their
18 experience. And response to rape often results in
19 symptoms that lead an immigrant in the midst of
20 legal proceedings to become severely compromised in
21 their ability to act in their own behalf in their
22 legal proceedings and preparation.

23 Literally, the effect of a sexual assault
24 may mean the difference between a safe, continued
25 life in the United States and return to a dangerous

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1 home situation.

2 You heard that in earlier testimony when
3 the woman withdrew her asylum request to escape her
4 situation.

5 Sexual assault and threatened sexual
6 assault are frequent causes of suicide attempts in
7 detention.

8 In summary, sexual violence is an act that
9 results in not only physical, but psychological and
10 emotional harm to its victims. Consequences of
11 sexual violence are life-threatening and long-term.

12 Immigrants are particularly vulnerable to
13 sexual violence and to the adverse effects of sexual
14 violence due to their social, cultural, and language
15 isolation; their poor understanding of U.S. culture
16 and the subculture of prisons; their being mixed
17 with individuals who have been found guilty of
18 criminal offenses and who may bring prison culture
19 with them; and their traumatic experiences in their
20 culture of origins.

21 I really thank you for this opportunity to
22 address you.

23 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you very much,
24 Dr. Wideman.

25 Let me just ask. One of the themes that we