Good Morning. My name is Kathryn Leehane.

I want to start by saying that I love Presentation High School, and I hold it in the highest regard. Since 1993, when I first reported the abuse I endured there, my goal has always been to ensure the safety and welfare of the young women who attend the school.

I also want to thank the courageous Presentation graduates who have responded to my article in the Washington Post to express their support and share their own stories of abuse. I believe you. I support you. And I stand with you as we work to make a difference.

One thing has become alarmingly clear: my abuse did not have to happen. The administration had notice going back to the mid-1980's that the teacher who abused me was a problem. The school had numerous opportunities to deal with him. Tragically, I was not his first—or his last—victim.

There is no indication that my report was ever acted upon or that my abuser was ever held accountable. When I sent my first letter reporting that he had groped me and shown me pictures of a naked woman, the administration didn’t even respond. After I sent my second letter to the administration and two teachers, I finally received a response, but I felt as though I was being intimidated into retracting my report.

For six years, I repeatedly contacted the administration to ensure it was addressed, but no one ever contacted me to ask questions or to investigate my report. I felt my abuse was brushed aside. Even after I provided a witness to one incident of sexual misconduct, and then persistently asked for an update from the administration, I was never given one. Eventually I lost hope for a response and was effectively silenced.

Unfortunately, I am not alone. I’ve heard from multiple survivors—even Presentation graduates as recent as the past few years—who experienced the same mistreatment when they made reports of abuse to the administration. This harmful culture of silencing victims must end.

I am proud to be a Presentation alumna, and I am incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support I’ve received from the Presentation community—students, parents, teachers, and graduates alike. Together, we can work to make our beloved school stronger and safer for young women going forward—and we can hold accountable those responsible for failing to protect all the students entrusted to their care.

Thank you.