So I'm not very hopeful about this new program. Rather than continue to jabber on, I think I'll just pass the microphone. Thank you.

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

MR. BRYAN LONEGAN: Yeah. Exactly.

CHAIRMAN WALTON: Ms. Wideman.

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

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

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

And the thing that I know is that sexual violence thrives in shadows. If you look at all the
places in the world where there's frequent sexual violence, you'll see common denominators. The perpetrators have a belief that they will not be punished for what they will do or they will not receive significant consequences.

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

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

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

Those who have committed crimes and served
prison sentences before coming to immigration detention bring with them a prison culture. This includes certain principles. And one of the principles is silence. Do not tell authorities what has occurred, but settle it among the inmates.

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

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

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

And the immigrants are poorly equipped to learn this new culture. They're already often struggling with language, with fear, with anxiety. They've come from cultures where prison and incarceration included an expectation of torture or bad treatment. They have a mistrust of authority and a fear of causing any kind of trouble which
might hurt their case. They often do not seek out or divulge abuse
to medical or mental health staff even if those
staff are available. They are vulnerable to
accepting abuse in silence.

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

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

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

They're unaware of behaviors in states that
make them more vulnerable, isolating, and the
perception that their family has money or
connections.
Immigrants are often in this country due to abuse, torture, or traumatic events in their country of origin. And these events may have come due to war, political activity, discrimination, abuse at home.

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

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

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

They feel a lack of self-worth and come to expect bad treatment and harm from others. They may be so numbed and overwhelmed by prior experiences that they cope with new threats and traumatization by shutting down and not fighting back.
Their failure to fight back might be interpreted by other inmates or staff as confirmation of their willingness to be further victimized.

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

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

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

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

Immigrants in detention find themselves isolated in terms of language and understanding procedures and processes. They often need other
inmates to translate for them, a further embarrassment when discussing an assault.

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

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

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

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

Literally, the effect of a sexual assault may mean the difference between a safe, continued life in the United States and return to a dangerous
home situation.

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

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

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

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

I really thank you for this opportunity to
address you.

CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you very much,

Dr. Wideman.

Let me just ask. One of the themes that we