

MS NOW's *The Moment with Katy Tur*

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Politico: Woman Who Dates Graham Platner Said He Sexually Assaulted Her, Platner Denies Claims]

KATY TUR: What has been the feeling on Capitol Hill about his candidacy? I mean, he is now the primary winner in Maine. He's going up against Susan Collins. I think he leads her by a couple of points in the most recent Maine polling. Is this going to change the way that Democrats on Capitol Hill, maybe Speaker Jeffries [sic] or Minority Leader Schumer talk about him?

MYCHAEL SCHNELL: I think that, first off, it's going to be a — we're going to be paying close attention to Graham Platner —

TUR: Leader Jeffries, sorry.

SCHNELL: — yes, yes. He has said that he denies these allegations. But a key date we're watching is July 13th. According to Maine law, a candidate has up until the second Monday of July. So, that being July 13, one month [sic] from today where they can drop out and then the party can nominate somebody else to be the standard bearer for that election. Janet Mills, notably, is still on the ballot in that primary. Just last month or just recently, she had gotten about almost 20 percent of the vote. Graham Platner with 70 percent of the vote, a little over 70 percent. A lot of folks, I think, wondering to see if Graham Platner maybe takes himself out of this race, opening up a lane for somebody else. The sentiment on Capitol Hill was that Republicans [sic] were nervous that there were going to be more shoes to be dropped. And this was a concern that as these this speculation had swirled, Graham Platner came up to Capitol Hill and met with a number of Democrats, and there's reporting that he assured them that there was no more reporting to come out about his past, about his history. Obviously, that is not true, as we now have this *Politico* article. The sentiment that I was hearing was that Republicans [sic] — Democrats didn't see him as the perfect candidate, that there were these concerns about these indiscretions and these — these poor reports. But at the end of the day, Maine is such an important pickup opportunity for them, and he was their candidate. So, they were letting it go by the wayside. But certainly, I mean, this is very damning reporting right now, an instance of sexual assault. So, we're going to have to listen closely to see if that changes any minds.

TUR: Luke, what do you make of this?

LUKE RUSSERT: Well, I think something that jumped out to me in the article, which I just read, is that the person who made the accusations was very conflicted about coming forward, and primarily because she said she very much supported Platner's politics and believed in his messaging and didn't want to hurt him politically, but also felt it necessary to see the full scope of the person, and I think that's something that is going to have to be wrestled with. If these allegations are true, to this extent, I don't see how he can be the nominee for senator in Maine for

the Democratic Party. I think there's a lot of people who might look at this out of the gate and say, well, Ken Paxton in Texas is — is terrible, and the Republicans are putting him up, and he is someone who has had all sorts of legal issues and infidelity issues, etc. I think what you have here, though, is a pickup opportunity is incredibly important in Maine for the party if they want to get control of the Senate, but also somebody who there is a belief that he may have gotten through the storm on this, but now is looking that it's significantly worse than what was advertised, and especially for a party that was so intertwined with Me Too, and believing women, it looks very hypocritical if there is not, I think, a real examination of him moving forward.

TUR: Charles.

CHARLES BLOW: Well, the first thing I always want to say in situations like this is that sounds horrible and we deserve to hear her — more of her case if she wants to pursue other actions. I think she should be encouraged to do that, and we should wait to hear more of her case. But the second thing I want to say is that we continue to have a situation where Democrats and Republicans are playing by a completely separate, separate rulebooks [sic]. The idea that this would push him out of the race, maybe that's the right thing to do. But, you know, Donald Trump was found liable of sexually abusing a woman, and then eight months later, a separate jury found him guilty of liable for defamation of her, and then ten months after that, he was still elected. Christine Blasey Ford gave, I thought, compelling testimony against Brett Kavanaugh about what she said — she was raped. He was still confirmed by Republicans in the Senate. We are just on two different ball fields when it comes to cases like this, situations like this in politics.

TUR: All right. So, Graham Platner has released a video on social media. And the key part of it is he says: "Regardless of the inaccuracy of the reporting, he will be mindful of the political reality it will inflict. We are taking the time to reflect on the best path forward for the state that I love, the people I love, the movement I belong to, and the goal of defeating Susan Collins." So, it seems like the severity and the gravity of this reporting is certainly being felt in the campaign, and they're going to try to figure out if they do have a path forward.