1. **Reflect** on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

September 10, 2020. As I swiped past Instagram stories that day, one post by a friend caught my eye. “Failing to Pass the RUU-PKS bill, The People’s Representative Council judges it to be too liberal, free and feminist.” I couldn’t help but laugh. The RUU-PKS, which translates to the sexual violence eradication bill, would not only recognize and criminalize more forms of sexual violence (as opposed to only rape & molestation identified by our criminal code), but would also provide survivors with legal protection and assistance, physiological & psychosocial rehabilitation, and medical aid, just to name a few rights, none of which are enforced right now. Yet the council has chosen to remove it from the priority list and delay it, deeming the bill “too difficult to discuss” without any further elaboration. In my mind, I thought, “We could have had a major solution to solve this prevalent problem. Why are they acting so indifferent about this?”

I’ve heard countless stories from those around me whom I hold near and dear as well as from Indonesian netizens online, telling instances in which they felt violated and were unable to receive justice. “A motorcyclist grabbed my breast when I was walking,” “A man flashed me in public when I was a teen”, “I was raped by a friend”. I myself have been catcalled numerous times, but that’s a grain of salt in comparison to what others have undergone. Denying the legalization of RUU-PKS feels like our government is actively turning a blind eye towards survivors, allowing rape culture to persist.

We’re not receiving the justice that we deserve. Our criminal code is insufficient and does not recognize the complexity of sexual violence. The bill is especially critical right now not only because it is essential to improving victim protection, but also because the route the council has chosen would erase the hard work that went into realizing this bill as it would not be carried over to the next council of 2020-2024; the process, from drafting to deliberation, has to be repeated all over again. Without the bill, punishments wouldn’t be enforced and perpetrators would walk free without consequences. The increase in the number of victims would continually accelerate. We would normalize rape culture in our country.

Perhaps the reason the bill was “too difficult to discuss” could be attributed to the pandemic. That being said, I couldn’t help but question why there was a long pause in the deliberation between 2017 and 2019. Others argue that it promotes free sex, adultery, and homosexuality. They may be looking for worst case scenarios and ways in which citizens could manipulate these laws, but this bill focuses on sexual violence eradication; accounting for those concerns can be done through another bill. It makes no mention of these issues at all and is only providing solutions and prevention methods for this widespread problem.

I cannot truly say what the outcome of all this is as it is an ongoing matter, but at our current state, it is highly likely that the council will postpone the bill until further notice; it isn’t a priority to them, even though it definitely is to us. With our continuous uproarious response through social media and taking it to the streets, one can only hope that the government will finally step up and listen. I’ve made my stance very clear; donating to organizations that aid survivors and sparking conversations about this “taboo” topic through social media, in the classroom, and at home. These healthy discussions prompted me to reflect about the state of my country and fueled the sense of urgency. Admittedly, I wish I could have done more to help out, but for now all I can do is remain resilient and use my voice, as the future is dependent on public participation.