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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR RAPE

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, two Stanford students were biking one night when they noticed a half naked woman lying motionless behind a dumpster with a male student on top of her. When they confronted the attacker, the man took off in the darkness of the night. The Good Samaritans were able to catch the coward and knock him to the ground. The woman, just 22 years of age at the time, was being raped, and the rapist was caught in the act.

When the victim regained consciousness, she was on a gurney, covered with pine needles, and was bleeding. Her assailant was Brock Turner, a scholarship swimmer at Stanford. Brock was found guilty of sexual assault on three counts. His sentence? A mere 6 months in prison and 3 years probation. Because the judge said "a prison sentence would have a severe impact on him." Well, isn't that the point?

Mr. Speaker, the punishment for rape should be longer than a semester in college. The defendant's dad called it a

"steep price to pay for 20 minutes of action." Clearly, Brock is a chip off the old block and daddy will never be named father of the year.

For many victims, Mr. Speaker, rape is a fate worse than death. Here is why. Because rape victims say that after being raped, they die emotionally many times; and with homicide, one dies only once.

After the sentencing, the brave victim read, Mr. Speaker, a 7,200-word statement to her attacker, the rapist. She said in part:

"I tried to push it out of my mind, but it was so heavy I didn't talk, I didn't eat, I didn't sleep, I didn't interact with anyone. I became isolated from the ones I loved the most. After I learned about the graphic details of my own sexual assault, the news article listed his swimming times, saying 'by the way, he's really good at swimming.'"

"I was the wounded antelope of the herd, completely alone and vulnerable, physically unable to fend for myself, and he chose me. During the investigation, I was pummeled with narrowed, pointed questions that dissected my personal life, love life, past life, family life, inane questions, accumulating trivial details to try and find an excuse for this guy who had me half naked before even bothering to ask for my name.

"My damage was internal, unseen, I carry it with me. You took away my worth, my privacy, my energy, my time, my safety, my intimacy, my confidence, my own voice.

"While you worry about your shattered reputation, I can't sleep alone at night without having a light on, like a 5-year-old, because I have nightmares of being touched where I cannot wake up. I did this thing where I waited until the sun came up and I felt safe enough to sleep."

Mr. Speaker, I was a prosecutor and a criminal court judge in Texas for

over 30 years. I met a lot of rape victims and learned how these attacks sometimes devastate their lives.

This judge got it wrong. There is an archaic philosophy in some courts "that sin ain't sin as long as good folk do it." In this case, the court and the defendant's father wanted a pass for the rapist because he was a big-shot swimmer. The judge should be removed.

The rapist should do more time for the dastardly deed that he did that night. This arrogant defendant has appealed the sentence. I hope the appeals court does grant the appeal and make it right and overturn the pathetic sentence and give him the punishment he deserves.

As a country, Mr. Speaker, we must change our mentality and make sure that people recognize sexual assault and rape for the horrible crimes that they are. As a grandfather of 11, I want to know that my granddaughters are growing up in a society that has zero tolerance for this criminal conduct. No means no. A woman who is unconscious does not even have the ability to consent or fight back.

Victims, like this remarkable woman, must know that society and the justice system are on their side. Too often the focus is on defending, protecting, and excusing sex offenders like Brock Turner. The entitlement mentality, being a good college athlete, and self-righteousness do not trump justice.

In 6 months, when Brock Turner is out of prison, he will return to his life, but the life of the victim may never be the same. The criminal has given her a life sentence of mental pain, anguish, and turmoil. Mr. Speaker, when rape occurs, the criminal is trying to steal the very soul of the victim.

Justice demands the judge be removed. The defendant should receive more time in prison. We, the people,

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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the community, must support and assist the victim in all possible ways because, Mr. Speaker, rape is never the fault of the victim.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the statement of the victim in this case.

THIS IS A PARTIAL EXCERPT OF A 7,200 WORD STATEMENT FROM THE STANFORD RAPE VICTIM

"Your Honor, if it is all right, for the majority of this statement I would like to address the defendant directly. You don't know me, but you've been inside me, and that's why we're here today.

On January 17th, 2015, it was a quiet Saturday night at home. My dad made some dinner and I sat at the table with my younger sister who was visiting for the weekend. I was working full time and it was approaching my bed time. I planned to stay at home by myself, watch some TV and read, while she went to a party with her friends. Then, I decided it was my only night with her, I had nothing better to do, so why not, there's a dumb party ten minutes from my house, I would go, dance like a fool, and embarrass my younger sister. On the way there, I joked that undergrad guys would have braces. My sister teased me for wearing a beige cardigan to a frat party like a librarian. I called myself 'big mama', because I knew I'd be the oldest one there. I made silly faces, let my guard down, and drank liquor too fast not factoring in that my tolerance had significantly lowered since college. The next thing I remember I was in a gurney in a hallway. I had dried blood and bandages on the backs of my hands and elbow. I thought maybe I had fallen and was in an admin office on campus. I was very calm and wondering where my sister was. A deputy explained I had been assaulted. I still remained calm, assured he was speaking to the wrong person. I knew no one at this party. When I was finally allowed to use the restroom, I pulled down the hospital pants they had given me, went to pull down my underwear, and felt nothing. I still remember the feeling of my hands touching my skin and grabbing nothing. I looked down and there was nothing. The thin piece of fabric, the only thing between my vagina and anything else, was missing and everything inside me was silenced. I still don't have words for that feeling. In order to keep breathing, I thought maybe the policemen used scissors to cut them off for evidence. . . .

On that morning, all that I was told was that I had been found behind a dumpster, potentially penetrated by a stranger, and that I should get retested for HIV because results don't always show up immediately. But for now, I should go home and get back to my normal life. Imagine stepping back into the world with only that information. They gave me huge hugs and I walked out of the hospital into the parking lot wearing the new sweatshirt and sweatpants they provided me, as they had only allowed me to keep my necklace and shoes. . . . My sister picked me up, face wet from tears and contorted in anguish. Instinctively and immediately, I wanted to take away her pain. I smiled at her, I told her to look at me, I'm right here, I'm okay, everything's okay, I'm right here. My hair is washed and clean, they gave me the strangest shampoo, calm down, and look at me. Look at these funny new sweatpants and sweatshirt, I look like a P.E. teacher, let's go home, let's eat something. She did not know that beneath my sweatsuit, I had scratches and bandages on my skin, my vagina was sore and had become a strange, dark color from all the prodding, my under-

wear was missing, and I felt too empty to continue to speak. That I was also afraid, that I was also devastated. That day we drove home and for hours in silence my younger sister held me. My boyfriend did not know what happened, but called that day and said, 'I was really worried about you last night, you scared me, did you make it home okay?' I was horrified. That's when I learned I had called him that night in my blackout, left an incomprehensible voicemail, that we had also spoken on the phone, but I was slurring so heavily he was scared for me, that he repeatedly told me to go find [my sister]. Again, he asked me, 'What happened last night? Did you make it home okay?' I said yes, and hung up to cry.

You said, Being drunk I just couldn't make the best decisions and neither could she.

Alcohol is not an excuse. Is it a factor? Yes. But alcohol was not the one who stripped me, fingered me, had my head dragging against the ground, with me almost fully naked. Having too much to drink was an amateur mistake that I admit to, but it is not criminal. Everyone in this room has had a night where they have regretted drinking too much, or knows someone close to them who has had a night where they have regretted drinking too much. Regretting drinking is not the same as regretting sexual assault. We were both drunk, the difference is I did not take off your pants and underwear, touch you inappropriately, and run away. That's the difference.

You said, If I wanted to get to know her, I should have asked for her number, rather than asking her to go back to my room.

I'm not mad because you didn't ask for my number. Even if you did know me, I would not want to be in this situation. My own boyfriend knows me, but if he asked to finger me behind a dumpster, I would slap him. No girl wants to be in this situation. Nobody. I don't care if you know their phone number or not.

My independence, natural joy, gentleness, and steady lifestyle I had been enjoying became distorted beyond recognition. I became closed off, angry, self deprecating, tired, irritable, empty. The isolation at times was unbearable. You cannot give me back the life I had before that night either. While you worry about your shattered reputation, I refrigerated spoons every night so when I woke up, and my eyes were puffy from crying, I would hold the spoons to my eyes to lessen the swelling so that I could see. I showed up an hour late to work every morning, excused myself to cry in the stairwells, I can tell you all the best places in that building to cry where no one can hear you. The pain became so bad that I had to explain the private details to my boss to let her know why I was leaving. I needed time because continuing day to day was not possible. I used my savings to go as far away as I could possibly be. I did not return to work full time as I knew I'd have to take weeks off in the future for the hearing and trial, that were constantly being rescheduled. My life was put on hold for over a year, my structure had collapsed.

I can't sleep alone at night without having a light on, like a five year old, because I have nightmares of being touched where I cannot wake up, I did this thing where I waited until the sun came up and I felt safe enough to sleep. For three months, I went to bed at six o'clock in the morning.

You cannot give me back my sleepless nights. The way I have broken down sobbing uncontrollably if I'm watching a movie and a woman is harmed, to say it lightly, this experience has expanded my empathy for other victims. I have lost weight from stress, when people would comment I told them I've been running a lot lately. There are times I did not want to be touched. I have to relearn

that I am not fragile, I am capable, I am wholesome, not just livid and weak.

He is a lifetime sex registrant. That doesn't expire. Just like what he did to me doesn't expire, doesn't just go away after a set number of years. It stays with me, it's part of my identity, it has forever changed the way I carry myself, the way I live the rest of my life.

To conclude, I want to say thank you. To everyone from the intern who made me oatmeal when I woke up at the hospital that morning, to the deputy who waited beside me, to the nurses who calmed me, to the detective who listened to me and never judged me, to my advocates who stood unwaveringly beside me, to my therapist who taught me to find courage in vulnerability, to my boss for being kind and understanding, to my incredible parents who teach me how to turn pain into strength, to my grandma who snuck chocolate into the courtroom throughout this to give to me, my friends who remind me how to be happy, to my boyfriend who is patient and loving, to my unconquerable sister who is the other half of my heart, to Alaleh, my idol, who fought tirelessly and never doubted me. Thank you to everyone involved in the trial for their time and attention. Thank you to girls across the nation that wrote cards to my DA to give to me, so many strangers who cared for me.

Most importantly, thank you to the two men who saved me, who I have yet to meet. I sleep with two bicycles that I drew taped above my bed to remind myself there are heroes in this story. That we are looking out for one another. To have known all of these people, to have felt their protection and love, is something I will never forget.

And finally, to girls everywhere, I am with you. On nights when you feel alone, I am with you. When people doubt you or dismiss you, I am with you. I fought every day for you. So never stop fighting, I believe you. As the author Anne Lamott once wrote, 'Lighthouses don't go running all over an island looking for boats to save; they just stand there shining.' Although I can't save every boat, I hope that by speaking today, you absorbed a small amount of light, a small knowing that you can't be silenced, a small satisfaction that justice was served, a small assurance that we are getting somewhere, and a big, big knowing that you are important, unquestionably, you are untouchable, you are beautiful, you are to be valued, respected, undeniably, every minute of every day, you are powerful and nobody can take that away from you. To girls everywhere, I am with you. Thank you."

CARBON TAX AND OIL TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEWHOUSE). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my friend from Texas. They are important to consider.

I am going to shift gears for a moment. I have another issue to talk about today. To a certain extent, I have great sympathy for my Republican colleagues. They have been stuck with a standard-bearer for their party, who is a bigot, a bully, a liar, a misogynist, with no discernible qualifications for the high office that he seeks. But they are not helping themselves by trying to shift the subject of debate here on the floor of the House.