

harmful mandates and taxes—so that we can increase seniors' access without compromising quality of care or efficiency. It is important to improve the quality of health care in our country for our Nation's seniors.

Congress has also taken action to improve Medicare. Over the past year, the House has passed a number of bills, including the Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act, the Medicare Beneficiary Preservation of Choice Act, and the Medicare Advantage enrollment bill—all proposals that would protect and preserve Medicare for our seniors who rely on it as well as to restore and expand the Medicare open enrollment period.

The House also took action and made significant reforms to Social Security and Medicare, saving millions of seniors from significantly increased healthcare costs. By working in a bipartisan fashion, Congress was able to state off a massive premium hike for seniors who utilize Medicare part B. Without this action, approximately 8 million seniors across our country would have been subjected to a 52 percent premium hike for Medicare part B. In this bipartisan effort, action was taken to prevent a 20 percent across-the-board cut to Social Security disability benefits.

Moreover, in working across the aisle with my colleagues in the House, we were able to repeal the sustainable growth rate formula, also known as the doc fix, to prevent there being a 20 percent cut to Medicare. This action alone has been seen as the most significant Medicare reform that has taken place in years. Without this legislation, which is now law, many doctors would have simply stopped accepting new Medicare patients or would have even ceased in accepting Medicare altogether.

Congress has also been committed to passing legislation and securing funding to expand seniors' access to the most innovative technologies and treatments so that we can diagnose and treat diseases as early as possible.

Last year, the House passed the 21st Century Cures Act, bipartisan legislation I cosponsored in Congress to improve and modernize our Nation's health care. This legislation would accelerate the process for scientific advancement while providing desperately needed research funding so that we can provide the next generation of cures. It is our duty as Americans to always protect and improve the quality of life and care for our Nation's seniors.

If anyone in the First Congressional District of New York ever needs assistance or has questions about Social Security and Medicare or a Federal issue in general, I encourage you to contact my Long Island office at area code (631) 289-1097.

□ 1030

STANFORD RAPE CASE AND SENTENCING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, these are the facts: Brock Turner was found on top of an unconscious woman whose clothing he had removed. He tried to run away. The woman later found pine needles and dirt in her genitalia.

This is also a fact: Brock Turner was sentenced to a mere 6 months in county jail for committing the violent crime of rape, of which Turner will probably serve 3 months. Why? Because the judge said a longer sentence would have a "severe impact" on Turner. A severe impact? What a travesty.

All I could think of was Proverbs, which says: "A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain and a corrupt spring."

Our justice system must become better than this. Our educational system must become better than this. People must understand that rape is one of the most violent crimes a person can commit and not as Mr. TURNER's father said, "20 minutes of action."

I am working on several pieces of legislation to help survivors of sexual assault and harassment, including the HALT Act to strengthen prevention and enforcement efforts on campuses. But today I want to honor the courage of the woman who survived Brock Turner's violent assault. Her bravery inspires me, as I hope it will inspire you. I only have time to read an excerpt, but I encourage you to read the entire statement, all 7,000 words.

"You don't know me, but you've been inside me, and that's why we're here today."

"I was found unconscious, with my hair dishevelled, long necklace wrapped around my neck, bra pulled out of my dress, dress pulled off over my shoulders and pulled up above my waist, that I was butt naked all the way down to my boots, legs spread apart, and had been penetrated by a foreign object by someone I did not recognize."

"You are guilty. Twelve jurors convicted you guilty of three felony counts beyond reasonable doubt, that's twelve votes per count, thirty six yeses confirming guilt, that's one hundred percent, unanimous guilt."

"Alcohol is not an excuse . . . alcohol was not the one who stripped me, fingered me, had my head dragging against the ground, with me almost fully naked."

"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."

"How fast Brock swims does not lessen the severity of what happened to me, and should not lessen the severity of his punishment. If a first-time of-

fender from an underprivileged background was accused of three felonies and displayed no accountability for his actions other than drinking, what would his sentence be?

"The fact that Brock was an athlete at a private university should not be seen as an entitlement to leniency, but as an opportunity to send a message that sexual assault is against the law regardless of social class."

" . . . 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 everyday 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 . . . 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."

VOLUNTEERING THE MIDWEST WAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mary Gangl of Coon Rapids, Minnesota. Mary was recently awarded the Office Volunteer of the Year Sylvie, which is given annually by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Upper Midwest Chapter.

The Sylvie award was presented to Mary for her contributions to the society which works to improve the lives of those diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Mary spends nearly 400 hours a year volunteering at the office front desk where she helps with many important tasks as well as welcoming visitors and staff.

Multiple sclerosis is a debilitating disease of the central nervous system, which affects more than 2 million people worldwide. Those affected by this disease have devastating symptoms; and, unfortunately, at this time, there is no cure.

I want to thank Mary for dedicating so much of her time volunteering to help others. Your hard work is appreciated, and you truly deserve this award.

MINNESOTA HOME TO MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Minnesota-based company Sign-Zone for receiving a Manufacturers Alliance Manufacturer of the Year award for midsize businesses. Sign-Zone is highly deserving of this award, as it is one of