



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2018

No. 25

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 8, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RODNEY DAVIS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, 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. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

COLLEGES SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when Anna first set foot on the campus of Hobart and William Smith Colleges in 2014, she immediately fell in love with the school. Nestled deep in the scenic New York Finger Lakes, the small liberal arts college appeared serene and safe.

On that beautiful campus, however, was hiding a much more dangerous re-

ality. Unfortunately, Anna would discover the terrible truth just two weeks after she arrived.

On the second Saturday of the semester, Anna was eager to go out and meet more of her fellow classmates. As the night went on, Anna got separated from her friends. When they received a text from her telling them that she was scared of someone she had met and didn't know what to do, they began frantically searching for her.

It wasn't until the early-morning hours that they finally found her, bent over a pool table with a football player appearing to sexually assault her. Her friends immediately took her back to the dormitory. Anna was very ill, pale, and disoriented. Worried that she had been drugged and raped, her friends called the paramedics.

After assessing Anna, the paramedics knew she needed to be examined by a sexual assault forensic examiner, commonly called a SAFE. SAFEs are specially trained to deal with sexual assault victims and collect forensic evidence through rape kits. Especially in cases where the victim has been drugged or was inebriated, forensic evidence can provide important evidence against an attacker.

Anna was lucky that the paramedics knew she must be treated by a SAFE, but unfortunately, many victims at colleges are never given this option. To ensure that all victims can have this care, I have introduced legislation that would require a hospital to provide access to a SAFE and a university to provide access to a SAFE who is properly trained to provide care sensitive to the trauma a rape victim has been experiencing or to have a plan in place to quickly get a victim to a nearby hospital.

The bill, named the Megan Rondini Act in honor of a college rape victim who was denied proper post-rape treatment at a hospital, will ensure victims can access the care they need.

After the medical exam, Anna returned to school and reported the attack. She was shocked, however, when the school reacted with skepticism and indifference. Without giving Anna any time to prepare or even get the results of her rape kit, the school immediately held a hearing to adjudicate the case. There was no campus victim advocate to assist her and speak up for her during the disciplinary hearing. The panelists spoke over her, interrupted her, and asked her all types of accusatory questions.

So, just 12 days after the assault, the school cleared the accused of all charges. Devastated, Anna took leave to recover at home. And while Anna eventually did return to finish her degree, she never believed justice against her attacker was achieved.

All victims of sexual assault on campus should have access to a victim advocate. Advocates can offer counseling, legal advice, assistance during hearings, and emotional support. Perhaps if Anna had access to this vital service, she would have gotten the justice that she was seeking.

Mr. Speaker, if colleges and universities choose to adjudicate sexual assault on campus independent of law enforcement investigation, then victims should have access to a campus victim advocate who is trained under Title IX. This is only fair. Schools must be prepared to deal with sexual assault victims and must have access to a SAFE, and they must have access to a victim advocate. Otherwise, victims will never know whether justice is served for them. And justice, Mr. Speaker, is supposed to be what we do, even on university campuses.

And that is the just the way it is.

DON'T DEPORT DREAMERS; VOTE AGAINST THE BUDGET

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

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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