

"On Saturday, Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, along with members of her congressional staff and constituents, were senselessly shot while attending a "Congress on Your Corner" event in Tucson. Those killed by the gunman—U.S. District Judge John Roll, Gabe Zimmerman, Christina Green, Dorothy Morris, Phyllis Scheck and Dorwin Stoddard—were citizens participating in the democratic process, meeting and speaking with their Member of Congress.

Like everyone else, I was shocked by the news. This kind of deadly violence shakes a community and a nation to its core. The rapid, life-saving action of Tucson's emergency responders and medical professionals and the acts of courage displayed by those at the event do, however, serve to remind us that the kindness of the human spirit can fight back in even the darkest of moments. My thoughts and prayers are with all those in Tucson, in particular the families of those who were injured or killed, and especially with my friend and outstanding colleague in the House, Gabrielle Giffords.

In the four years I have served with Congresswoman Giffords, she has been a stalwart supporter of her district, her state and America's interests at home and abroad. It is impossible not to admire her commitment to the job of Representative and the passion with which she pursues her interests and policy agenda. I am proud to serve on the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, where Gabby is an influential advocate for renewable energy. She is a positive, moderate, thoughtful voice in our Caucus, and it is my greatest hope that she will recover from this terrible tragedy and return as soon as possible to her job. We certainly need her and miss her. I don't believe that I have ever seen her without a smile on her face, which is quite a feat for someone working on Capitol Hill. She is a wonderful, upbeat and remarkable person.

It is imperative that we begin to learn everything we can from what happened in Tucson. If we do not take what measures we can to prevent such violence from occurring in the future, we not only do a disservice to those who were harmed and killed on Saturday, but we betray our commitment to the participatory principles on which our democracy, which must serve as a political and social example to other nations, was founded. We should re-examine how we treat and care for those suffering mentally in our country. We must thoroughly discuss how individuals become eligible to purchase automatic weapons. And we must learn to communicate about our differences in ways that are more thoughtful and civil and that better promote aspiration to those qualities in all who hear or read our words.

I continue to hope and pray for a full recovery for Congresswoman Giffords and the other

injured victims and for a healing within for all those hurt internally by Saturday's events. Our nation must continue to grow and become stronger in the face of this tragedy."