



NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

Rep. Giffords Shooting is an Attack on All of Us: NOW Calls on Right Wing to Disavow Violence and Hate Speech *Statement of NOW President Terry O'Neill*

January 8, 2011

NOW condemns the tragic shooting of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.) that stole six lives and seriously injured 12 today. We condemn, equally, the culture of hate and violence increasingly reflected in extreme right-wing opponents of those who support progressive solutions to our country's challenges.

Rep. Giffords, whose office was vandalized after she voted for the federal health care reform law last year, was also named on Sarah Palin's "Targeted" list. Giffords (who has been consistently endorsed by NOW's PAC) herself understood the not-so-well veiled threat, stating "the thing is that the way she [Palin] has it depicted, we're in the crosshairs of a gun sight over our district. When people do that, they've got to realize that there are consequences to that action."

The pious condemnations we are now hearing by right-wing leaders are of little comfort if not accompanied by concrete action. Conservatives cannot have it both ways, screaming sexist, racist and homophobic slurs at legislators as they vote for health care reform, putting legislators on a violence-inciting "Targets" list, and then simply saying how sorry they are when someone explodes into murder.

In November 2009, as Democratic women spoke on the House floor about how the Affordable Care Act would benefit women, Republican Congressmen shouted them down. Led by Rep. Tom Price (R-Ga.), who repeatedly yelled "I object. I object. I object. I object. I object," as Rep. Lois Capps (D-Calif.) tried to talk, they carried on this attack for half an hour.

In March 2010, Tea Party supporters screamed a racial epithet at Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) as he walked toward Congress from a health care reform meeting. Rep. Andre Carson (D-Ind.) was walking with Lewis and confirmed the protesters were yelling "Kill the bill, kill the bill," when they used the racial epithet. One man spit on Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.) as he walked to the Capitol. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) was taunted with anti-gay epithets as he left the same meeting in a House office building.

We call on Republican leaders to do more than disavow hatred, hostility and violence-laden speech as a political tool. We also call upon the Justice Department to investigate -- to the fullest extent of federal anti-terrorist legislation -- reports that this mass murder, which included the killing of a federal judge and the attempted assassination of a member of Congress, was part of a conspiracy.

NOW offers our sincere condolences to the families of those who were slain, and we hope that all those who were injured will soon recover. Our thoughts are with all those involved in this horrible tragedy.

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For Immediate Release

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