

1/14/11 Statement from the LWVUS regarding the tragedy in Tucson:

Statement from Elisabeth MacNamara, President, League of Women Voters of the United States:

Washington, DC – "The League of Women Voters joins with all Americans in expressing our shock and dismay at the tragic shootings in Tucson last weekend. We express our deep sorrow to the families of the victims, and offer our sincere hopes for the recovery of Representative Giffords and the other survivors. We applaud the courage of the individuals, thinking they were just out for a Saturday conversation, who took immediate action to help the injured and end the rampage.

"What can we make of this madness, this senseless act of violence? And terrible though this event was for all of us now, what might the long term effects be? Will it make public figures - politicians, media figures, celebrities - more mindful of the potentially harmful impact of their angry words - or will everyone continue to put their own agendas first, without regard to the climate they create? Will it make the public more trusting of the patriotic motivations of their elected leaders - or will respect for them be further diminished? Will it make our elected leaders more willing to reach out to meet and hear from their constituents directly - or will it reinforce the growing gap between voters and those they put in office? Will it allow Americans to feel comfortable and welcome in the public space - or will they conclude that it is safer to stay home and drop out of the conversation? It is clearly time for each of us to consider these issues, individually and as a community.

"For 90 years, the League has worked to facilitate the civil exchange of different points of view, to bridge the gap between the voters and the elected, and to help improve the functioning of government. We hope that moving forward our nation will come together to foster and strengthen the very essence of our representative democracy: 'government of the people, by the people, for the people.'"

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages.

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