

Christian Leaders Respond to Arizona Shootings

John F. Kennedy was assassinated. President Ronald Reagan was shot. But in a peaceful democracy the attempts on the lives of public officials seem few and far between—until this weekend.

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords remains in critical condition after accused gunman Jared Lee Loughner allegedly opened fire at a community political event. Giffords took a bullet to the head. Gabe Zimmerman, 30, a Giffords staff member, was killed, along with Chief Judge Roll and four others.

President Barack Obama led the White House in a moment of silence to honor the victims of the tragedy in Tucson, including those still fighting for their lives. Meanwhile, Christian leaders are speaking out on the event.

Franklin Graham, president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, says as the American people grapple for answers to the question of how something as senseless as this shooting could happen, we need to be measured and cautious before we place blame.

“Hasty accusations have already been made before much information is known and an investigation has occurred. I believe this is counterproductive and could in itself incite hatred. This is not a time for political opportunism,” Graham says.

“Just because we disagree with someone from another political party does not mean we wish them harm. Furthermore, if something horrific happens to a person, it does not mean those who hold differing views are responsible for the actions of a disturbed individual.”

Graham says what frightens him most is that our country has

accepted murder, violence and rape as entertainment that we see portrayed every day on TV, movies and video games. He agrees with Sheriff Clarence Dupnik when he alluded to the fact that this country needs some serious soul searching. If we as a nation are not careful, he says, we could see the destruction of the foundation upon which this nation was built.

“Clearly our politicians and pundits on the left and right must also be careful. Their leadership and rhetoric must set an example for decency and civility,” Graham says. “My prayer is that God will put His loving arms around the families and victims in their time of loss and great suffering, and that they would sense His presence and comfort in their lives.”

(Read Franklin Graham’s entire statement, [here](#).)

Richard Viguerie, Chairman of , says sent his heartfelt sympathies out to the family of Giffords, as well as all the families of the wounded and deceased.

“Regardless of political party, Americans are drawn together at this time of tragedy, and our prayers go out to the families of all the victims of this shocking act of violence,” Viguerie says. “We are all Americans, and there’re no Democrats, Republicans, conservatives, or liberals at times like these. When the violent acts of an individual aim to tear our society apart, they instead cause Americans to come together and unite stronger than ever. We pray for the lives lost, and for the full and speedy recovery of all who were wounded.”

Alliance Defense Fund President, CEO, and General Counsel Alan Sears spoke directly to the shooting death Chief Judge John McCarthy Roll of the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona.

“Chief Judge Roll was a great lawyer, sound jurist, and a long-time friend. Our hearts are deeply grieved over this

tragedy,” says Alliance Defense Fund President, CEO, and General Counsel Alan Sears regarding the shooting death Chief Judge John McCarthy Roll of the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona.

“His untimely death is a huge loss for America’s judicial system and for all of us, personally. One consolation we have in our grief is that because of John’s fervent love for the Lord, he is right now rejoicing in the loving presence of his Creator. We will keep the judge’s family and his countless friends and students in our prayers.”