

# Giffords to resign from Congress

## Wounds still need time to heal one year after assassination attempt

By DAVID ESPO  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Rep. Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona announced Sunday she intends to resign from Congress this week to concentrate on recovering from wounds suffered in an assassination attempt a little more than a year ago that shook the country.

"I don't remember much from that horrible day, but I will never forget the trust you placed in me to be your voice," the Democratic lawmaker said on a video posted without prior notice on her Facebook page.

"I'm getting better. Every day my spirit is high," she said. "I have more work to do on my recovery. So to do what's best for Arizona, I will step down this week."

Giffords was shot in the head and grievously wounded last January as she was meeting with constituents outside a supermarket in Tucson, Ariz. Her progress had seemed remarkable, to the point that she was able to walk dramati-



Rep. Gabrielle Giffords announcing via video footage Sunday her plans to resign from Congress this week.

cally into the House chamber last August to cast a vote.

Her shooting prompted an agonizing national debate about supercharged rhetoric in political campaigns, although the man charged in the shooting later turned out to be mentally ill.

In Washington, members of Congress were told to pay more

attention to their physical security. Legislation was introduced to ban high-capacity ammunition clips, although it never advanced.

Under state law, Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer must call a special election to fill out the remainder of Giffords' term, which ends at the end of 2012.

President Barack Obama on

Sunday called Giffords "the very best of what public service should be."

"Gabby's cheerful presence will be missed in Washington," Obama said. "But she will remain an inspiration to all whose lives she touched — myself included. And I'm confident that we haven't seen the last of this extraordinary American."

House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said he saluted Giffords "for her service and for the courage and perseverance she has shown in the face of tragedy. She will be missed."

In a statement, House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California said that "since the tragic events one year ago, Gabby has been an inspiring symbol of determination and courage to millions of Americans."

Democratic officials had held out hope for months that the congresswoman might recover sufficiently to run for re-election or even become a candidate to replace retiring Republican Sen. Jon Kyl.

# Health overhaul lags in Southern states

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Here's a reality check for President Barack Obama's health overhaul: Three out of four uninsured Americans live in states that have yet to figure out how to deliver on its promise of affordable medical care.

This is the year that will make or break the health care law. States were supposed to be partners in carrying out the biggest safety net expansion since Medicare and Medicaid, and the White House claims they're making steady progress.

But an analysis by The Associated Press shows that states are moving in fits and starts. Combined with new insurance coverage estimates from the nonpartisan Urban Institute, it reveals a patchwork nation.

Such uneven progress could have real con-

sequences.

If it continues, it will mean disparities and delays from state to state in carrying out an immense expansion of health insurance scheduled in the law for 2014. That could happen even if the Supreme Court upholds Obama's law, called the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

"There will be something there, but if it doesn't mesh with the state's culture and if the state is not really supporting it, that certainly won't help it succeed," said Urban Institute senior researcher Matthew Buettgens.

The 13 states that have adopted a plan are home to only 1 in 4 of the uninsured. An additional 17 states are making headway, but it's not clear all will succeed. The 20 states lagging behind account for the biggest share of the uninsured, 42 percent.

Among the lagging states are four with argu-

ably the most to gain. Texas, Florida, Georgia and Ohio together would add more than 7 million people to the insurance rolls, according to Urban Institute estimates, reducing the annual burden of charity care by \$10.7 billion.

"It's not that we want something for free, but we want something we can afford," said Vicki McCuiston of Driftwood, Texas, who works two part-time jobs and is uninsured. With the nation's highest uninsured rate, her state has made little progress.

The Obama administration says McCuiston and others in the same predicament have nothing to fear. "The fact of states moving at different rates does not create disparities for a particular state's uninsured population," said Steve Larsen, director of the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight at the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

# SPLOST: Storm water issues top priority

Continued from 1A

projects once planned by the city may no longer be possible, said City Manager Bill Weeks.

"We are jointly working to identify what projects can be done," Weeks said, adding that about 75 percent of the funds col-

lected for the city from SPLOST will address storm water issues and support police and fire department needs.

It will likely take some time for the city to sort through the details, and Weeks said he expects to report back in a few weeks.

No deadline has been given to

the city for when it needs to have the figures ready, Morgan said.

Questions regarding the SPLOST funds were raised by Clyde Taylor, chair of the water-sewer commission board, during its Jan. 5 meeting. Taylor asked board member and city commissioner James Brooks to review

the missing SPLOST funds with city officials.

Since then, there has been little action, though Taylor says the city and water-sewer commission are working together to confirm the situation and solutions.

"We're trying to get all our pieces together," Taylor said.

# Manager: City works with tight budget

Continued from 1A

job for at least the next six months, Weeks says he's in a better position to move the city forward.

"Time will help in itself knowing that I'll be there and they won't be moving on to someone else," said Weeks. "It'll help morale and spirit and enthusiasm, so we can get the ball rolling."

Weeks was named acting city manager after City Manager Roosevelt Harris was forced to retire in August. Weeks had

served as Harris' assistant since 2007, after taking over the reins of Community Development.

Weeks feels he's now in a position to help make some moves that will encourage growth and economic development.

"What can we do to locally expand and bring small businesses to the city? We need to put more effort into that," said Weeks.

"It comes down to the vision of the commission. It's time to lay out a plan of attack to meet some goals."

Weeks plans to make the most of a tightened budget.

"I'm very focused on the financial process and the budget process right now," he said. "We're looking at SPLOST 5, and we're in a big push to look at starting projects and pushing others along."

Next year's budget, agreed Mayor Bryan Thompson, is an important part of what Weeks has to look forward to managing.

The city's new fiscal year begins July 1.

"We're going to need to find areas to improve upon to have a streamlined budget," said Thompson. "It's a slow process, but we need the patience of the constituents."

Weeks has the ability to help the city move forward and grow, said Thompson.

"We have a strong and good working relationship," said Thompson, who has worked with Weeks since his time in Brunswick. "We'll be able to get things done and in an orderly fashion."

# Crime: Violent crimes increase slightly

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Green.

Green has also restructured the department since becoming chief. He said that has helped some areas of crime enforcement.

Moving traffic enforcement to the department's field services division has helped scheduling and operations, he said.

Not everything was down. Violent crimes in the city increased overall by 5 percent, but that was largely due to an uptick in aggravated assaults.

There were 24 more aggravated assaults, which are assaults that involve weapons, in 2011 than in 2010. There were 176 reported last year and 152 in 2010, according to police figures.

Other violent crime categories either remained flat or decreased.

General assault statistics dropped by 11 percent, with 616 in 2011 and 690 in 2010, a change of 74 reports.

There were eight fewer robberies in the city, with 68 reported in 2011 and 76 in 2010.

Three fewer rapes were report-

ed, down to five from eight, and the number of homicides did not change, with two homicides reported both in 2010 and in 2011.

While the increase in aggravated assaults is an issue, Green said the police department is working hard and heading in the right direction.

"Our relationship with the Glynn County Police Department is invaluable. We are sharing more information, especially between the two (Crime Investigation Divisions) and through our joint drug task force," Green

said. There are more changes to come Green said he hopes will continue to reduce crime.

"A new initiative we are going to start is our 'AP' squad, or 'All Purpose' squad. All Purpose squad officers are going to have several modes of transportation, including, a (bicycle), a Segway, boat patrol and, of course, a patrol vehicle," Green said.

The Force 23 unit will soon gain an officer, Green said. Traffic enforcement will also gain an officer.

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