

## “WMC EXCLUSIVE! GIFFORD’S TRAGEDY: WHAT’S THE MESSAGE TO YOUNG WOMEN?”

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We have been almost paralyzed by horror over the events in Arizona. Not Gloria Feldt. She has written a passionate appeal to action. For those of us who stood up for civil rights, women’s rights, gay rights, it is time to mount a calm, cool, and collected campaign to cure the ills in our public life – civic rights.

– Suzanne Braun Levine

### **EXCLUSIVE: GIFFORDS’ TRAGEDY – What Is the Message to Young Women?**

“When an angry young man aimed his semiautomatic handgun at Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in a Tucson Safeway store on Saturday, he didn’t just critically wound her and kill or wound 19 others. He fired a shot through the heart of American democracy.

It will fall to rising leaders like Giffords—and girls like nine-year-old Christina Green, killed by the assailant’s gunfire just days after she was elected to her school’s student council—to transform our political community to one where differences can be debated safely and policies decided without fear for anything but re-election prospects.

I feel a deeply personal connection to those horrendous events that occurred during the latest “Congress on Your Corner” public meeting the third-term Democratic congresswoman has held routinely in her district. Though I was witnessing them from New York, I’m a resident of Scottsdale, 120 miles north of Tucson, and from 1978 to 1996 was CEO of Planned Parenthood in Arizona. I know the state’s wild-west politics quite well. And I’m so familiar with violent extremist attacks upon reproductive health providers that my first reaction was to swing reflexively into “how can I keep colleagues safe and courageous” mode....

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**Gloria Feldt** is a nationally renowned activist and author whose passion for social justice has propelled her life's work. Her previous books include the New York Times bestseller *Send Yourself Roses*, co-authored with actress Kathleen Turner, *Behind Every Choice Is a Story*, and *The War on Choice*. *People Magazine* calls Feldt "the voice of experience." A teen mother from rural Texas, Feldt served as president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the nation's largest reproductive health and advocacy organization, from 1996-2005.

Feldt's passion for bettering women's lives remains her driving force as an independent commentator on women's issues, politics, media, and leadership. She teaches "Women, Power, and Leadership" at Arizona State University and serves on the board of the Women's Media Center.

[www.gloriafeldt.com](http://www.gloriafeldt.com)