Beat: Politics

Ex-U.S. Congresswoman Giffords says may return to political office

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USPA News - Former U.S. Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, who was critically injured in an assassination attempt at a political event in Arizona in January 2011, has said she might consider a return to political office in the near future, according to an interview broadcast on Thursday. Wednesday marked the third anniversary of the shooting outside a supermarket in northwest Tucson, where Giffords was hosting her first "Congress on Your Corner" of the year.

Jared Lee Loughner, armed with a semi-automatic pistol, walked up to Giffords and shot her in the head at close range. The Democrat, who was at the time representing Arizona`s 8th congressional district, was critically injured and remained hospitalized for months. She announced her resignation from U.S. Congress in January 2012 to focus on her recovery, and she has continued to make progress ever since. Giffords marked the third anniversary by jumping out of an airplane in Arizona in a tandem skydive, followed by an interview with NBC`s "TODAY" show. "Oh, wonderful sky. Gorgeous mountain. Blue skies. I like a lot," she said about the skydive, calling the jump "a lot of fun" and "peaceful." The former congresswoman is still undergoing extensive rehabilitation therapy but is optimistic about the future, hoping to learn Spanish again and getting back to playing French horn. When asked about whether she would want to return to political office, she said: "Well, a little bit later. Little bit later. Maybe, maybe." Giffords also hinted at returning to political office when she announced her resignation in a two-minute video in January 2012. "I`m getting better. Everyday, my spirit is high. I will return, and we will work together for Arizona and this great country," the politician said in the YouTube video. After shooting Giffords in the January 2011 attack in Tucson, Loughner turned his weapon on others who were attending the political event, killing six people and injuring twelve others. Among the fatalities was federal judge John Roll and 9-year-old Christina-Taylor Green. In August 2012, Loughner pleaded guilty to nineteen federal charges in a plea agreement which spared him a federal death penalty and instead sentenced him to seven consecutive life sentences, followed by 140 years in prison, with no eligibility for parole. The deal also waived Loughner`s right to an appeal. Giffords and her husband, astronaut Mark Kelly, previously said they supported the plea agreement. "The pain and loss caused by the events of January 8, 2011, are incalculable. Avoiding a trial will allow us - and we hope the whole Southern Arizona community - to continue with our recovery and move forward with our lives," the couple said at the time.

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