

The US government on Sunday charged a 22-year-old man with attempted assassination in the Arizona shooting rampage and doctors expressed optimism that wounded congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords would recover.

The shooting of Giffords and 19 other people — six of whom were killed — in Tucson on Saturday fueled debate about extreme political rhetoric in the United States after an acrimonious campaign for congressional elections in November.

The US government charged Jared Lee Loughner with two counts of first degree murder, one count of attempted assassination of a member of Congress and two other counts of attempted murder. He was due to appear in court in Phoenix on Monday afternoon, the Justice Department said.

Investigators said in the charges they found an envelope at his residence with the handwritten phrases “I planned ahead” and “My assassination,” along with the name “Giffords” and what appeared to be Loughner’s signature.

The suspect opened fire with a semi-automatic pistol at point-blank range outside a supermarket. US federal judge John Roll and a 9-year-old girl were among the six people killed. Fourteen people were wounded.

The FBI said it had cleared a man officials had earlier sought to locate in connection with the shootings.

“At this time we don’t have any reason to believe that there were any other individuals” associated with Loughner in the shooting, said special agent and FBI spokesman Manuel Johnson.

Public officials should be on alert but there was no information to suggest a specific threat, FBI Director Robert Mueller told a news conference.

But Mueller said “hate speech and other inciteful speech” presented a challenge to law enforcement officials, especially when it resulted in “lone wolves” undertaking attacks.

President Barack Obama called on Americans to hold a moment of silence on Monday at 11 a.m. EST (1600 GMT) to commemorate the victims of the shooting.

Giffords, a 40-year-old Democrat, was in critical condition but was able to follow simple commands, such as holding up two fingers when asked, doctors at University Medical Center in Tucson said.

A single bullet traveled the length of her brain on the left side, hitting an area that controls speech functions. Given the devastating wound, doctors said they were uncertain about the extent of brain damage she had suffered.

Giffords has been put into a pharmaceutical coma but was being awakened frequently to check her progress.

“There are obvious areas of our brain that are less tolerant to intrusion,” said Dr. Michael Lemole. “I don’t want to go down the speculation road but at the same time we’re cautiously optimistic.”

### ***RAMBLING MANIFESTO***

Gun violence is common in the United States but political shootings are rare.

Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik said a wounded woman grabbed away an ammunition magazine from the gunman, possibly preventing even more people from being shot. The gunman managed to reload his Glock pistol but the fresh magazine would not work and the suspect was then tackled by two men.

The violence shocked politicians in Washington. Some Democrats were quick to say a shrill climate of political vitriol might have played a role.

“We are in a dark place in this country right now and the atmospheric condition is toxic,” Democratic Representative Emanuel Cleaver told NBC’s “Meet the Press” program.

But Jon Kyl, a Republican senator from Arizona, cautioned against a “rush to speculate.”

“We really don’t know what motivated this young person, except to know he was very mentally unstable,” Kyl said on the “Face the Nation” show on CBS.

The father of the slain 9-year-old girl said she was born on September 11, 2001 — the day of the hijacked plane attacks on New York and Washington. “She came into the world on 9/11 and then at 9 years old she leaves it all on this terrible day,” John Green told ABC News.

Investigators were looking at a rambling Internet manifesto left by Loughner or someone writing under that name. There was no coherent theme to the writing, which accused the government of mind control and demanded a new currency.

The US Army confirmed the suspect attempted to enlist in December 2008 but was rejected for unspecified reasons. CNN reported he was rejected for failing a drug test.

### ***POLITICAL FALLOUT***

Lawmakers in Washington put off their agenda for this week, including a vote on the repeal of Obama’s contentious healthcare overhaul. The president postponed a visit on Tuesday to a division of General Electric in Schenectady, New York.

The new Congress convened last week after the Nov. 2 elections in which the Republican Party won control of the House and reduced the Democratic majority in the Senate.

The US Capitol Police cautioned members of Congress “to take reasonable and prudent precautions.” Still, most lawmakers are largely unguarded outside the Capitol, except the leaders of the House and Senate, who have security details.

Giffords warned previously that the heated rhetoric had prompted violent threats against her and vandalism at her office. Mueller said the suspect had attended a public event held by Giffords in 2007.

In an interview last year with MSNBC, Giffords cited a map of electoral targets put out by Sarah Palin, a Republican former Alaska governor and prominent conservative, that had each marked by the crosshairs of a rifle sight.

After the shooting, the graphic was removed from Palin’s website and she offered condolences on a posting on Facebook.

A Palin aide, Rebecca Mansour, told conservative radio host Tammy Bruce of the graphic: “We never, ever, ever intended it to be gun sights. It was simply crosshairs like you’d see on maps ... a surveyor’s symbol.”

### ***YOUTUBE VIDEOS***

In several videos on the Internet site YouTube, a person with the name Jared Lee Loughner criticizes the government and religion. It was not known whether he was the same person as the suspect.

“The government is implying mind control and brainwash on the people by controlling grammar,” the man says. “No! I won’t pay debt with a currency that’s not backed by gold and silver! No! I won’t trust in God!”

Giffords, married to NASA astronaut Navy Captain Mark Kelly, is seen as a rising star in the Democratic Party. She narrowly defeated a conservative opponent and was one of the few

Democrats to survive the Republican sweep in swing districts in November's elections.

Arizona has been at the center of a political firestorm in the past year, symbolizing a bitter partisan divide across much of America.

The spark was the border state's move to crack down on illegal immigration last summer, a bill proposed by conservative lawmakers and signed by the state's Republican governor, Jan Brewer.

### ***Details of murder, other charges in Arizona shooting***

The US Justice Department announced on Sunday five separate criminal charges against Arizona shooting suspect Jared Lee Loughner, including attempted assassination of a US congresswoman.

It released details of the five counts filed in federal court in Phoenix, where Loughner is due to make his initial court appearance on Monday before a federal magistrate judge.

The department said Loughner is suspected of shooting Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, US federal judge John Roll, Giffords' staff member Gabriel Zimmerman and about 16 others at a political event Giffords hosted on Saturday in Tucson.

Following are the details of each charge stemming from the shooting rampage:

- Count 1 alleges Loughner attempted to assassinate Giffords, according to charges based on digital surveillance video of the event and other investigation by the FBI and law enforcement agencies. The Democratic lawmaker was seriously wounded in the attack, according to the court documents.
- Count 2 alleges he killed Zimmerman, who was assisting Giffords while she was engaged in the performance of her official duties as a Congresswoman.
- Count 3 alleges Loughner killed Roll. According to the court documents, Roll had worked with Giffords in the last few months on issues concerning the volume of cases in Arizona and that he sought to speak to her at the event.
- Counts 4 and 5 allege Loughner attempted to kill two other staff members, Pamela

Simon and Ron Barber, who were assisting Giffords.

US prosecutors could later bring other charges against Loughner. The US attorney's office in Arizona said it is in the process of drafting an indictment against Loughner to be presented to a federal grand jury.