

Giffords: Reacts to gun lobby champion Speaker Paul Ryan's retirement announcement

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CONTACT: Jason Phelps, jphelps@giffords.org

Washington DC — Today, Peter Ambler, executive director of Giffords, the gun safety organization founded by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and Captain Mark Kelly, released the following statement reacting to the news that House Speaker Paul Ryan would not be seeking reelection.

Last month, Giffords named Rep. Ryan to their initial list of candidates to defeat due to his disastrous record on gun safety and his failure to hold a vote on a single bill that would strengthen our nation's gun laws. Giffords also launched an ad campaign highlighting Rep. Ryan's failed leadership on protecting Americans from the gun violence crisis.

Peter Ambler, Giffords Executive Director:

"Speaker Ryan's decision to not run in 2018 is further evidence of Republican vulnerability on the issue of gun safety. As voter intensity on this issue increases, the politicians paid to defend the firearms industry are becoming aware of the fact that they can no longer get away with staying silent. They know the same Americans who took to the streets to march for safer communities, will soon march to the ballot box.

"Speaker Ryan presided over Congress while our nation experienced five of the deadliest mass shootings in modern history. He watched as the gun death rate in Americans spiked to a level not seen in decades. Yet, Paul Ryan refused to allow

even a single vote on legislation to improve our gun laws. Tragedy after tragedy, Ryan held moments of silence and offered 'thoughts and prayers,' but refused to take any meaningful action to prevent the next one from occurring. Instead, he cashed checks from the NRA and promoted their political agenda in Congress, prioritizing the interests of the gun industry over public safety.

"In the aftermath of the tragic school shooting in Parkland, Florida, Americans are furious at politicians who have failed at one of our fundamental moral responsibilities — keeping our kids safe. Speaker Ryan is the personification of that failure. The voters of Wisconsin have an opportunity to turn the page and elect someone who knows what it means to fight for safer communities: Randy Bryce. Randy understands that the people of Wisconsin want someone who will fight to keep their children and communities safe. As an army veteran and a cancer survivor, Randy Bryce embodies the courage and strength to persist our nation needs to fight to end America's epidemic of gun violence, once and for all."

Watch the ad [here](#).

As Speaker, Paul Ryan determined which bills were brought to the floor for a vote, making him uniquely responsible for Congress' inaction on addressing gun violence. Five of the ten deadliest shootings in US history have occurred during Paul Ryan's tenure as speaker. During that time, he's repeatedly blocked consideration in the House of any policies that could help reduce gun violence

In the wake of the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando in which 49 people were killed and 58 others were wounded House Democrats staged a sit to call attention to House leadership inaction on the issue and demand a vote on legislation that could help prevent future tragedies.

Just two weeks ago Giffords launched the start of a political program for 2018 that included Speaker Ryan as one of the initial six on a #VoteThemOut list that will focus on incumbents in priority districts by shining a light on their record of prioritizing the interests of the gun industry over public safety, and encourage voters to support candidates with the courage to stand up to the gun lobby.

Speaker Ryan has faced criticism from his constituents for failing to stand up for the safety of American communities. Following the March 24th March For Our Lives events around the country, a group of Wisconsin students marched more than 50 miles from Madison to Speaker Ryan's hometown of Janesville to demand safer gun

laws. Last weekend, Speaker Ryan failed to attend a town hall focused on gun safety organized by students. Giffords-endorsed candidate Randy Bryce showed up to have a conversation with voters about safety, saying, “If he knows his policies are so horrible in D.C., I don’t know if I’d want to come back and face you either.”