

Obama urges Americans to unify in wake of Ariz. tragedy

By Michael A. Memoli and Michael Muskal, Los Angeles Times

TUCSON – With a plea to the nation to overcome its divisions, President Obama paid tribute to the victims and heroes of the weekend shooting spree in Arizona and sounded a call for Americans to heal themselves.

Obama came to the University of Arizona, where he spoke to a cheering crowd of more than 26,000 – including 13,000 in an overflow area in Arizona Stadium – all seeking solace after days of tumult in the wake of the attack in Tucson that killed six and injured 13. The president and First Lady Michelle Obama earlier visited Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.), who was critically injured in the violence that shocked the nation and prompted a debate on civility in politics.



Rep. Gabby Giffords opened her eyes for the first time Wednesday after being shot Saturday.

Most of his speech paid tribute to the victims, especially to 9-year-old Christina Taylor Green, the youngest of the slain. Christina has become a symbol for those, including her parents, who have called for an end to such violence. She had gone to a Safeway shopping center to meet Giffords, who was holding a meeting there with constituents Saturday morning when the attack began.

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