

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Naming of USS Gabrielle Giffords, LCS 10
Pentagon
February 10, 2012

Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, Congressman Ike Skelton, Captain Kelly, Roxanna Green, Chief of Naval Operations Jon Greenert, to the distinguished group we have here today, thank you so much for being here.

We just met with the Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, the senior leaders of the Department. They all would've been here except for a conflict in the scheduling that they could absolutely not change, but they all got a chance to meet with and talk to our distinguished platform party here today.

First, Congressman Skelton, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for all the work you have done on behalf of the US Navy and Marine Corps. For 34 years serving in the House and on the Armed Services Committee, you stood watch with us and demonstrated leadership and dedication both to our country and to the men and women who wear her uniform of our country. So, thank you.

Congresswoman Gabby Giffords, you make this occasion special by your presence. What you did in Congress for our military and for those who serve in it gave substance to what America feels for those in uniform. You fought for our servicemen and women while they fought for our country; you kept faith with veterans to repay their faithfulness, you inspired passion for renewable energy that will lessen our military's dependence on foreign sources of fuels. We also need to note your devotion to one particular Naval Officer turned Astronaut who returns that great devotion in full measure, recently retired Navy Captain Mark Kelly. Thank you Gabby and thank you Mark.

We are here today to name the 10th Littoral Combat Ship—LCS 10. The LCS is a major part of the future of our Navy. She's going to provide our Navy and our country with fast, agile and flexible capabilities. She will be outfitted with modular payloads that can be changed out quickly to meet unanticipated challenges and this ship can perform an amazing variety of missions.

She has the ability to operate in shallow waters that major warships cannot get into; she can defeat close-in threats, but she's also capable of blue-water operations. LCS is one of the most versatile, most valuable ships in the Navy.

LCS 10 will be a part of our fleet for more than three decades. Sailors not yet born will serve aboard her. This ship may well be the only part of America, and her Sailors the only Americans, that many people around the world will ever see. The name this ship bears and the story represented by that name will inspire all those who come in contact with her.

The Navy motto is *Semper Fortis*, Always Courageous. Unwavering courage has defined the Navy for 236 years and it is what we expect and what we demand from our Sailors every single day.

So it is very appropriate that LCS 10 be named for someone who has become synonymous with courage and who has inspired a nation with remarkable resiliency and showed the possibilities of the human spirit.

Unwavering Courage. LCS 10—the USS Gabrielle Giffords.

One more naval tradition needs to be honored today and that is naming the sponsor of the Gabrielle Giffords. The sponsor will have her initials welded into the keel, the sponsor will break the bottle of champagne across her bow and the sponsor will give

the order to bring the ship to life when she is commissioned. The sponsor of the Gabrielle Giffords will be with that ship and a part of that ship for as long as it is in the fleet.

On that dark, tragic day now more than a year ago, Christina-Taylor Green was taken from us. A nine year old who had just been elected to the student council, she wanted to become a more active participant in our democracy. Her mother, Roxanna Green, continues to express her daughter's hope for the future and, as the President said, "of a nation as good as she imagined." The sponsor of USS Gabrielle Giffords, Roxanna Green.

Thank you Gabby Giffords. Thank you Roxanna Green for being here today and being a part of the life of this ship and our Navy's history. I want to thank all of you for being here and joining in the celebration of the courageous spirit of Gabrielle Giffords that will soon will be forged in steel and sent to sea to support our national defense.

God bless USS Gabrielle Giffords and all those who sail in her. Semper Fortis.