



Legislation Text

File #: R-25-23, Version: 1

Tennessee House of Representatives Expulsion of Democratic Members - For the purpose of supporting the three Tennessee state lawmakers who were expressing the will of their constituency regarding gun control; and condemning the expulsions of two of the three members of the Tennessee House of Representatives.

**CITY COUNCIL OF THE
City of Annapolis**

Resolution 25-23

Introduced by: Alderwoman Tierney

**Co-sponsored by: Mayor Buckley, Ald. O'Neill, Ald. Gay, Ald. Pindell Charles,
Ald. Schandelmeier, Ald. Savidge, Ald. Finlayson**

A RESOLUTION concerning

Tennessee House of Representatives Expulsion of Democratic Members

FOR the purpose of supporting the three Tennessee state lawmakers who were expressing the will of their constituency regarding gun control; and condemning the expulsions of two of the three members of the Tennessee House of Representatives.

WHEREAS, On March 27, 2023, a shooter killed three 9-year-old children and three staff members at the Covenant School, a Presbyterian private school in Nashville, Tennessee; the assailant used three weapons, including a military-style semi-automatic rifle, and fired 152 rounds while on the school grounds; and

WHEREAS, Protesters gathered inside and outside the Tennessee State Capitol as the legislative day began on March 30, 2023, to loudly but peacefully confront lawmakers about school safety; Tennessee Highway Patrol has confirmed that the protests were peaceful, no protestors were arrested, and no injuries or property damage were reported as a result; and

WHEREAS, Hearing no response to the protestors in the gallery above lawmakers who were considering other business on the chamber floor, three State Representatives -- Rep. Justin Jones (D-Nashville), Rep. Justin Pearson (D-Memphis), and Rep. Gloria Johnson (D-Knoxville) -- led the gun-reform protest from the floor podium; and

WHEREAS, The Tennessee House of Representatives recessed, and security cleared the galleries with

protesters leaving willingly; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee State House Republicans accused the trio of violating decorum rules and initiated expulsion of the three instead of considering a lesser punishment; up to that point, no Tennessee House of Representatives member had been removed from elected office for simply violating decorum rules; and

WHEREAS, On April 6, the Tennessee House of Representatives voted to expel Rep. Jones, 72-25, and Rep. Pearson, 69-26, removing two of the youngest Black lawmakers from the Tennessee General Assembly, further reducing an already small minority caucus; and

WHEREAS, State Rep. Gloria Johnson survived expulsion by one vote, with that vote drawing accusations of racism because State Rep. Johnson is white; the expulsions of the two Black representatives were effective immediately, temporarily removing representation for more than 150,000 Tennesseans who overwhelmingly elected State Rep. Jones and State Rep. Pearson; and

WHEREAS, President Joe Biden called the votes “shocking, undemocratic and without precedent,” condemning Tennessee’s GOP-led House for choosing to “punish, silence and expel” representatives rather than “debating the merits of the issue”;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL condemns the expulsions as a violation of the First Amendment, which protects freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and the right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL believes this act was a provocative and disproportionate response to the actions of the three representatives;

AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL that, more importantly, the silencing of these voices is an erosion of civility and democratic norms and an irreparable assault on democracy,