



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on April 12, 2023

Tennessee Rep. Reinstated; #ReleaseTheManifesto Goes Viral

Officials in Nashville have reappointed ousted state Representative Justin Jones to the Tennessee House as an interim to fill his own vacant position.

Jones walked back onto the House floor Monday, raising a fist to raucous shouts from crowds in the galleries. He was one of two lawmakers that the Republican majority voted to expel for leading protesters in an hour-long disruption of legislative business on March 30. The two Democrats used a bullhorn to repeatedly chant “no action, no peace,” demanding stricter gun control after the deadly shooting at Nashville’s Covenant School on March 27.



AP Images
Justin Jones

The city’s Metropolitan Council overruled the decision of the Tennessee House in a unanimous vote by suspending a procedural rule that prevents an individual from being nominated and appointed to an interim position during the same meeting. After that vote, Jones marched back to the state Capitol amid hundreds of supporters, whom he addressed — but this time outside, on the steps.

“Today we’re sending a resounding message that democracy will not be killed in the comfort of silence,” he said. He also called for the resignation of Republican House Speaker Cameron Sexton.

Jones’ colleague, Justin Pearson of Memphis, is expected to be reinstated today by his constituency — also to fill the position on an interim basis. Both men have said they plan to run in the special elections for their seats.

They got a boost last week with a surprise visit from U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, who spoke on their behalf Friday at Fisk University.

“A democracy says you don’t silence the people! You do not stifle the people!” she ranted. “You don’t turn off their microphones when they are speaking about the importance of life and liberty! That is not what a democracy does!”

During her visit, Harris met with the entire Democratic Tennessee state caucus as well as the ousted representatives. However, she did *not* take time for the families of the school shooting victims, sparking harsh criticism from both liberals and conservatives.

Political commentator Dan Eberhart tweeted: “Kamala Harris isn’t going to Tennessee to meet with the



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families of those who died in the horrific shooting. She's going there to meet with Democrats who are upset over facing consequences for their actions." Others pointed out the inequity of treatment that J6ers have received compared to the coddling of the Tennessee House disrupters.

All this adds fuel to the new hashtag, #ReleaseTheManifesto, that is spreading through social media like wildfire. It refers to the written declaration that Covenant School shooter Audrey Hale left behind. Nashville Police Chief John Drake had previously told the press that it reveals possible insights into motive, but now the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has possession of that document and the story is changing. Here is Bureau Director David Rausch's take on it:

"It's been characterized as a manifesto. I think that's a mischaracterization, personally," he told PIJN News. "The documents that we have — and I have viewed those — you know, one is specifically a plan, and the other is some journal-type rantings, uh, but nothing ... you know, when you talk about 'manifesto,' you talk about something similar to like the Uni-bomber left behind. Ideological expressions. None of that has surfaced in these writings. It's really unfortunate mental health issues that you can see as you read through the journal."

So why not release it to the public? Regardless of what it is called, voters want to see what the shooter wrote, according to a new Rasmussen Reports poll. Head pollster Mark Mitchell described the impressive results.

"The FBI supposedly has in its possession a manifesto written by the Nashville shooter," he explained. "American voters want it released — 68 percent of them, in fact."

It's a point of bipartisan agreement: 78 percent of Republicans and 66 percent of Democrats think the FBI should release the document. Even Biden supporters overwhelmingly (68 percent) look for its publication.

Meanwhile, Tennessee's Republican Governor Bill Lee signed an [executive order](#) Tuesday that tightens state background checks for purchasing firearms. His order mandates that government officials report all criminal and court mental-health information to the state instant background check system within 72 hours. He has also called on the state Legislature to pass a "red flag" law, making it easier to confiscate guns from people who are deemed dangerous. It's a surprising turnaround for the conservative, who two years ago led the charge in the state to allow residents 21 years and older to carry handguns in public without a permit.

Critics say Lee is giving in to pressure following the Covenant School shooting. Lawmakers such as Knoxville Representative Jason Zachary are vowing to oppose any red flag attempts, calling them bad policy for depriving individuals of due process. Tennessee already has laws preventing mentally defective individuals from possessing guns.



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