

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 292

Condemning the expulsion of two Black, duly elected Tennessee Representatives as a blatant act of racism and an attack on the democracy of the United States and observing that the Tennessee House of Representatives preferred to take this action of expulsion rather than to act on gun control measures to protect children.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 13, 2023

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE (for herself, Mr. COHEN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. IVEY, Ms. PRESSLEY, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. BOWMAN, Mr. EVANS, Mr. MULLIN, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Mr. GREEN of Texas) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Condemning the expulsion of two Black, duly elected Tennessee Representatives as a blatant act of racism and an attack on the democracy of the United States and observing that the Tennessee House of Representatives preferred to take this action of expulsion rather than to act on gun control measures to protect children.

Whereas, on November 8, 2022, the people of House District 52 elected Justin Jones in the general election for the Tennessee House of Representatives;

Whereas, on November 8, 2022, the people of House District 90 elected Gloria Johnson in the general election for the Tennessee House of Representatives;

Whereas, on March 14, 2023, the people of House District 86 elected Justin J. Pearson in the special election for the Tennessee House of Representatives;

Whereas, on March 27, 2023, a school shooting with legally bought weapons took place at The Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee;

Whereas, on March 30, 2023, Representatives Pearson, Jones, and Johnson led a gun control protest on the House floor following the mass shooting, advocating for the passage of gun reform legislation;

Whereas Republicans in the Tennessee General Assembly claimed that these elected officials brought “disorder and dishonor” to the Tennessee House of Representatives for fighting for common-sense gun reform legislation following the tragic murder of three children and three adults at The Covenant School;

Whereas, on April 6, 2023, the Tennessee House of Representatives expelled two Black lawmakers, Justin Jones in a 72 to 25 vote and Justin J. Pearson in a 69 to 26 vote, for exercising their constitutional right to protest;

Whereas expulsion has only been used in rare circumstances including in 1866 for attempting to prevent passage of the 14th Amendment, in 1980 for bribery, and in 2016 for sexual misconduct;

Whereas the White lawmaker, Representative Gloria Johnson, who joined the protest alongside Representative Jones and Representative Pearson, was not expelled;

Whereas Representative Jones and Representative Pearson represented the State's largest cities, with large Black populations;

Whereas, as a result, over 136,000 Tennesseans in Memphis and Nashville have had their democratic right to representation stripped from them;

Whereas this act of expelling Representative Jones and Representative Pearson silences Black American voices, further perpetuating the historical disenfranchisement of Black Americans;

Whereas until the United States reckons with its blatant and perpetual racism, the country will continue to be divided, and democracy will continue to be threatened;

Whereas elected officials in the United States must understand it is their duty to break the American cycle of systemic racism seeped within the country;

Whereas it is the responsibility of all elected officials to make decisions for the benefit of all Americans;

Whereas, as of March 2023, roughly 130 counted mass shootings have occurred in the United States in 2023;

Whereas, in June 2021, Tennessee Republicans enacted a law to allow permitless carry of handguns, both concealed and unconcealed, for people 21 years or older;

Whereas, in February 2023, Tennessee Republicans introduced a bill to expand permitless carry to include all firearms despite concerns from the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security;

Whereas section 1 of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution states: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United

States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”;

Whereas the continuation of democracy in the United States is an active process that requires the vigilance and action of those who are appointed and elected to preserve it; and

Whereas the continuation of democracy in the United States requires accountability for those who seek to damage it: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) condemns the expulsion of elected members
3 of the Tennessee General Assembly, Justin Jones
4 and Justin J. Pearson;

5 (2) recognizes these expulsions are attacks on
6 the fundamental ideals and livelihoods of American
7 democracy;

8 (3) acknowledges that the expulsion of two
9 Black lawmakers in a show of overt racism was the
10 preferred action of the Republican-led Tennessee
11 House of Representatives so as to avoid further dis-
12 cussion of gun control measures that could prevent
13 the death of more innocent schoolchildren and teach-
14 ers; and

15 (4) believes we have a gun violence crisis and
16 that State and Federal lawmakers should take ac-
17 tion to prevent future gun violence.

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