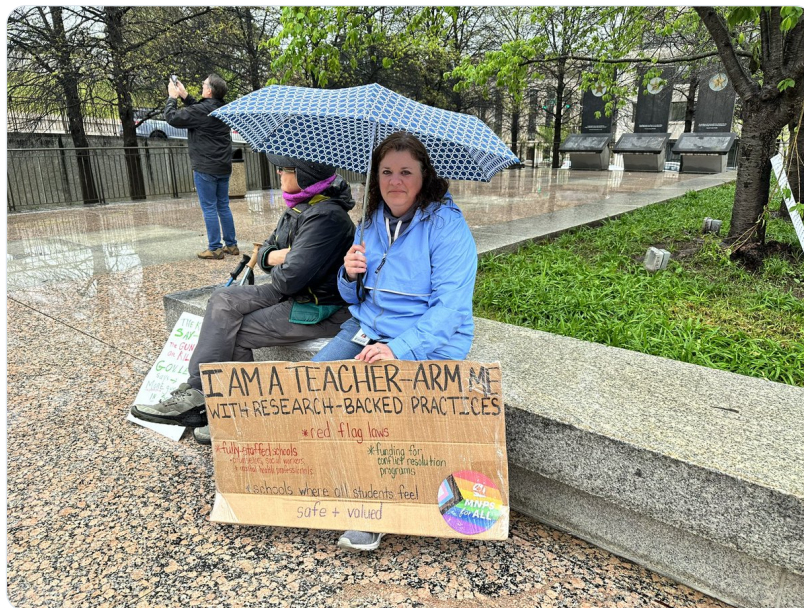




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Apr 6 · 77 tweets · [dajaehenry/status/1643961637504729088](https://twitter.com/dajaehenry/status/1643961637504729088)

Protesters are out at the State Capitol despite the rain to fight the looming expulsion of @VoteGloriaJ , @brotherjones_ and @Justinjpearson . This is Jennifer Simpson, a teacher in Metro Nashville Public Schools. @19thnews



These are Vanessa and Brice Newton. Brice is 12 years old and attends a private school near the Covenant School. They felt it was important to be here and make their voices heard.



The scene here in Nashville on the steps of the Capitol. They are chanting "Vote Him Out!" re: Bill Lee, the state's Republican Governor who introduced a \$205 million school safety proposal that did not address gun restrictions. Seconds ago, they chanted "Expel him!"



Demonstrators cheering as Rep. @brotherjones_ walks into the chamber. He is one of the 3 Democratic reps facing expulsion today.



Protesters are directly outside the chamber calling for gun control. Among those chanting are Katherine Honea and her 8-year-old son Elliot. Current chant: “Whose house? Our house!”



As the expulsion vote looms for the representatives who led a protest on the floor for gun violence last week, legislators are currently discussing HB0322, a school safety bill. Republican Rep. William Lamberth says the goal is to have an officer in each school.

.@VoteGloriaJ is speaking on her experience as a teacher in a school during a shooting. “We need to keep the guns from coming to the schoolhouse door,” she said. “We don’t want gun battles at our schoolhouse door.” Chants from outside: “Gloria! Gloria!”

Pearson: “Do you know about the school-to-prison pipeline?” References disproportionate effects on children of color when school resource officers are present. Says Republicans are trying to make schools more like prisons.

Pearson says bill does not address root causes of gun violence, calls for red flag laws and storage protection instead of arming people in schoolhouses.

“What happens when one of these officers kills an innocent kid?”

Chants outside: “Pearson! Pearson!”

Republican Rep. William Lamberth: this does not create a prison. It creates a fortress to keep people out, instead of in. Deafening boos from outside chambers. Follow-up chants outside: “Fuck you, fascists!”

.@brotherjones_ stepped out to address protesters outside of the chamber. Says Republican members are putting on a show before expulsion vote.



Jones is back on the floor, saying these bills are a spectacle that offers weak solutions for the people watching. He’s been cut off by House Speaker Sexton.

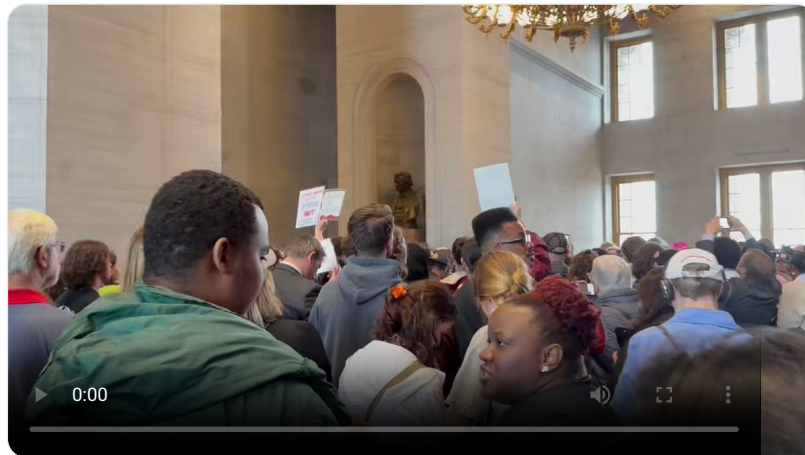
“It seems like we’re just making bills to say we did something,” Jones says. A bill that doesn’t mention proliferation of fund, mass shootings, is just a PR move, he says. Re: HB1016

Agenda for session is here if you’d like to follow along:

Notice HB1015, last on the agenda, has already been discussed. Part of the slate of bills in the ongoing conversation about gun violence that Pearson said do not address root of gun violence

issue.<https://wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/videocalendars/VideoCalendarOrders.aspx?CalendarID=30687&GA=113>

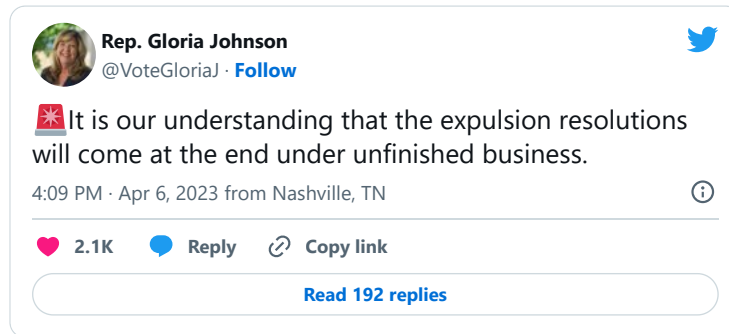
Outside chamber, protesters are singing “This Little Light of Mine.” The song is often sang by children, but it also was an anthem during protests during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950’s and 1960’s.



Pearson just thanked protesters outside chamber. “This is what democracy looks like,” he said. “They’re gonna expel us today, but they can’t silence us.”



For those still tuned in, going on 4 hours since the session started. Vote will likely be at the end. When protesters found out, they chanted that they will not leave.



Pearson and Jones were just outside with protesters. “This is gonna change everything,” Pearson said



Pearson addressed protesters outside the chamber again as we near the end of the agenda.



They are now on to unfinished business, where the expulsion votes will happen.

It's been proposed to play a 7-minute video from last week's protest on the floor. Democrats facing expulsion have not had access to the video. It will require 66 votes to pass, allowing the video to be played.

"This is essentially a trial," Democratic Rep. Bo Mitchell said. He says it's unfair to show a video to the jury at the same time as defendants, in keeping with courtroom analogy.

"Untie their hands. Allow them to fight," Democratic Rep. Joe Towns Jr. of Memphis urges.

Loud cheers outside the chamber as the video of Reps. Pearson, Jones, and Johnson's protest on the floor plays inside.

The video also splices in at least one clip from press conference after the incident.

Rep. Clemmons, Democrat of Nashville, asks for accountability for any member who recorded videos of the protests during House proceedings. Asks if there will be punishment for them, as recording is in violation of House rules.

Clemmons: "We're not playing by the same rules in a fair manner." Claims that there have multiple violations of the rules, namely the recording of the video and all who knew the video was recorded during proceedings.

The vote to expel @brotherjones_ of Nashville is up first. The resolution is being read on the floor.

Jones on the floor now. He has 20 minutes. Cheers outside the chamber.

"The world is watching Tennessee," he begins.

Jones said he broke a house rule, but exercised moral obedience to his people. "There comes a time where people get sick and tired of being sick and tired," he said. "By breaking decorum, we broke the glass of your false power for the world to see."

Jones alleging double standards on expulsion: lists a member who he said has peed in other members' chair, member under federal investigation, one found guilty of domestic violence.

Reminder that there have been three expulsions in the House's history. Expulsion of six members during Reconstruction. Two since then, both related to criminal offenses.

Rep. Jones: this is TN showing the world that "democracy is no more. Simply because of gerrymandered districts and voter suppression, you have stolen the people's house and think that you are ultimate authority."

Jones: "How can you bring dishonor to an already dishonorable house?"

Democratic Rep. Karen Camper of Memphis is up: "We have an opportunity to recognize someone just wanting to elevate the voices of their people...I am hoping that you decide to be on the right side of history at this time."

Rep. Ryan Williams, Republican of Cookeville asking what Jones means by "no peace," in the chant that went "No action, no peace."

Jones reads scripture from Jeremiah 6:14. Pasted here:

Jeremiah 6:14 ▾ New Living Translation ▾

14 They offer superficial treatments
for my people's mortal wound.
They give assurances of peace
when there is no peace.

Now speaking: Rep. Gino Bulso, who introduced the resolution to expel Johnson. Says Jones' argument was an eloquent argument for exactly why he should be expelled. "He called our speaker a liar...He insulted each and every one of you," he appeals to his colleagues.

Jones claims Bulso approached him in the elevator after last week's actions, calling him "a damn disgrace."

GOP Rep. Kumar of Springfield is condemning Jones' approach. "You look at everything through the lens of race," he said. Also urges Jones to "become one of us."

Kumar, who is an immigrant, urges Jones to join the society that will celebrate him.

Rep. Jones to Rep. Kumar: "You've put a brown face of White supremacy." Is interrupted by House Speaker Sexton.

Jones brings up GOP Rep. Paul Sherrell's attempt to bring back lynching as a form of execution last month in response to Kumar's statement that he's never heard a racial slur in the body.

GOP is trying to end debate. Jones will still have five minutes to close.

Crowd outside the chamber chanting "Let them speak!"

Speaker Sexton, for the second time, tried to call the vote prematurely. Jones' five minute closing speech is beginning.

"I was fighting for your children," Rep. Jones said.

"If I'm expelled from here, I'll be right out there with the people demanding that you act" on gun violence, Jones said to GOP colleagues.

The vote has been taken. 72-25. @brotherjones_ is expelled. Chants of "Shame! Shame!" from outside the chamber.

Now reading the resolution to expel @VoteGloriaJ. If proceedings continue like they did for Rep. Jones, she would have 20 minutes to open and 5 minutes to close, with debate in between.

Johnson is taking the floor with attorneys. She and 2 attorneys will have 20 minutes each to speak.

Johnson's attorneys are calling into question the accuracy of the statements made in the motion and cite her reputation as a public school teacher, Girl Scout, etc.

"Voting to cancel 3 lawful elections, doing so without any meaningful investigation is the opposite of upholding the law. This is the ultimate dangerous precedent and it puts every member's seat at risk." Johnson's team urges GOP colleagues to reconsider.

.@VoteGloriaJ now talking about a fatal school shooting in 2008 at Central High School in Knoxville, where she taught.

"That is why I walked up to this well with my other colleagues who are tired of having their voices cut off when we're trying to speak about violence..."

While Johnson fields questions from GOP colleagues, Pearson to press outside the chamber: It is no coincidence that the Republican supermajority is voting to expel two young, Black men and one woman.

Johnson said she taught near Columbine, and witnessed the aftermath of the trauma on students following the 1999 mass shooting at the Colorado High School.

Johnson tearing up as she mentions the names of the children killed in last week's shooting during her 5-minute closing speech. Vote on her expulsion to follow.

Johnson also says that she is not against guns, but the people who misuse them. She is a gunowner herself. Said that she stores it responsibly and underwent training.

@VoteGloriaJ is will stay in office. The motion was just short of the 2/3 needed to pass.

Pearson is up next. "To God be the glory," he starts off his 20-minute intro statements. Declares a victory in the failure to expel @VoteGloriaJ

Johnson and Jones were just outside the chamber. When asked about the different treatment than her colleague Jones, who was expelled: I believe it had something to do with the color of our skin.

Pearson draws on imagery of founding of America. "In a country that was founded on protest," he said, he and his colleagues face expulsion.

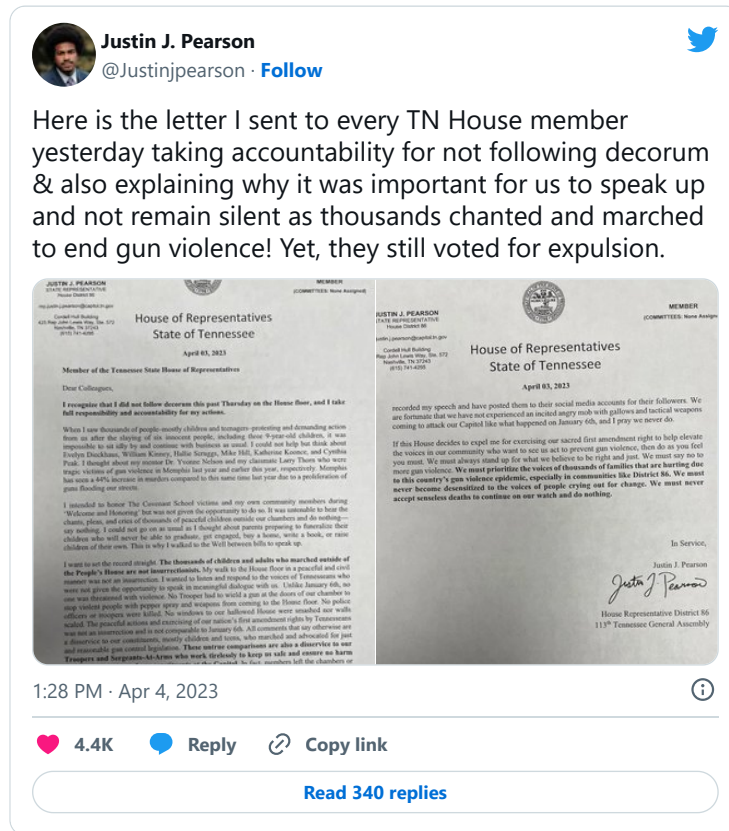
Rep. Farmer, Republican from Sevierville tries to get Pearson to acknowledge that he is in the well for breaking decorum. Pearson says he's there because GOP has passed a resolution that will disenfranchise thousands of his constituents.

Pearson: Today was the first day that there was actual debate on the House floor that reflected a semblance of democracy. Echoing Jones, who said earlier that GOP put on a show today while everyone is watching.

Farmer's temper flared when addressing Pearson.

"Now, you all heard that," Pearson said. "How many of you would want to be spoken to that way?" He said there is decorum that allows Farmer to feel comfortable belittling him.

Pearson's made a couple references to a letter he wrote to his fellow representatives. Here's that letter:



Lamberth, GOP Rep of Portland, says Pearson's protests have elevated his voice over everyone else's, including victims.

Pearson: You're wrong. I don't think one person's voice is more important than others... What about the thousands of protesters' voices you never recognized?

Rep. Torrey Haris, Democrat from Memphis, addresses Pearson as another young Black man in the legislature. Says he, too, has been silenced. "You've made a difference that everybody's gonna remember."

Pearson to GOP: This is an abuse of power. You have an obligation to stop turning the people's house into your own club.

David Hawk, GOP rep of Greeneville, questioning Pearson now. Hawk is one of reps. that Jones mentioned earlier when talking about double standards of expulsion. Hawk faced domestic violence charges in 2012.

Pearson: This country is changing. The diversity in the state is changing...The people protesting are not just rich or poor, Black or white. It is a multiracial coalition that can break any institution that refuses to change. I suggest that this institution choose to change.

Pearson is starting his closing remarks the same way he did his opening: Glory to God.

"Even now... I remember the good news." Nods to Holy Week. "My savior, my Black Jesus was lynched by the government on Friday...but there was good news for us. Idk how long this Saturday in TN might last, but we've got news that Sunday always comes. Resurrection is a promise."

Vote is up now. Deafening cheers from the crowd outside the chamber.

Vote passes 69-26. Rep. Justin J. Pearson is expelled from the Tennessee legislature.

"Shame!" is the repeated chant as the lawmakers exit the House.

What's next: county elected officials can appoint to the two vacant seats. Jones and Pearson can also be re-elected in a special election after this legislative session.

Story here:



Tennessee House votes to expel two members; vote to remove Johnso...

State Rep. Gloria Johnson, a former teacher, narrowly avoided expulsion in the wake of her call with two colleagues for action to combat gun violence.

<https://19thnews.org/2023/04/tennessee-legislators-facing-expulsion-gun-protests-for...>

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