

# [***Covenant moms emotional after bill to let teachers carry concealed guns passes Senate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BS5-TH51-JBSS-S00R-00000-00&context=1516831)

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NASHVILLE, Tennessee ([*WSMV*](https://www.wsmv.com/2024/04/09/covenant-moms-emotional-after-bill-let-teachers-carry-concealed-guns-passes-senate/)) -- Tuesday, dozens of people were told to leave the Senate gallery after multiple outbursts over a bill to arm staff members with guns inside schools.

The bill would require any school employee who wants to carry a concealed gun to get proper training and background checks.

"There's been a lot of misinformation about this legislation," said Senator Paul Bailey (R-Sparta), the bill's Senate sponsor during the floor session. "This bill does not require any teacher in the state to carry a gun while working."

What started with decorum, quickly turned into rebellion from the people above seated in the gallery.

"A teacher is not allowed to put a rainbow pride flag on their desk, but she's allowed to carry a gun in this state," questioned Senator Raumesh Akbari (D-Memphis). "That's all I'll say."

That's when the crowd above erupted, and Lieutenant Governor Randy McNally (R-Oak Grove) told the Sergeant-at-Arms to clear the gallery.

People watching shouted, "Shame on you" to the lawmakers below and slowly exited, but some remained in their seats. Moms of students at The Covenant School were allowed to stay, but they decided to leave as well and said it wasn't fair to the other moms forced to go.

After over 30 minutes, Senators went back into session and Democrats did what they could to stop the bill.

"Look at the gallery, they are asking you not to do this," said Senator London Lamar (D-Memphis). "Put partisan ***politics*** aside, I ask you this all the time, but this bill is dangerous. Don't do it."

In the end, senators voted to pass the bill with 26 ayes and 5 nays. That's when people who were earlier told to leave the gallery shouted outside the Senate chambers, "Vote them out".

While some people were furious, moms like Mary Joyce and Melissa Alexander, who have students at The Covenant School, were emotional. They said they spoke with lawmakers on Monday to add amendments to the bill but were unsuccessful.

"My child survived because the teacher kept the classroom quiet," Alexander said. "And I continue to tell that to all those in the legislature. This bill hasn't made it to the House floor yet, so we will continue to work with the House and hope for the best."

Alexander and Joyce said they feel lawmakers are passing this legislation fast since it is an election year. The bill is scheduled to be on the House floor next week.

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By Marissa Sulek

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