

# [***Tennessee Democrats Expelled For Protesting Gun Violence Win Back Seats In Special Election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68VV-G171-DXVP-51S6-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 638 words

**Byline:** Alison Durkee, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** The representatives won back full control of their seats in landslide votes.

**Body**

**Topline**

Tennessee state Reps. Justin Pearson and Justin Jones won back their seats in a special election Thursday, the Associated Pressreports, earning landslide victories after the two lawmakers were expelled by their colleagues for protesting gun violence after a mass shooting at a Nashville elementary school.

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Tennessee State Representatives Justin Jones and Justin J. Pearson demonstrate in support of gun control laws at Legislative Plaza on April 18 in Nashville, Tennessee.

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Pearson earned approximately94%of the votes in Tennessee s House District 86, which includes parts of Memphis, against Independent candidate Jeff Johnston, as reported by the Shelby County government with all precincts reporting.

Jones earned approximately78%of the votes in House District 52, which includes parts of Nashville, against Republican Laura Nelson, as reported by Davidson County with all precincts reporting.

The two lawmakers wereexpelledby the GOP-controlled legislature in April, as Republicans claimed the legislators brought dishonor and disorder to the state House after they protested gun violence on the House floor.

A third lawmaker, Rep. Gloria Johnson who is white, while Pearson and Jones are Black narrowly avoided being expelled by one vote.

Pearson and Jones werereinstatedto the House by local officials soon after their expulsions, but only on an interim basis, and the lawmakers needed to win the special elections to fully reclaim their seats for the rest of their two-year terms.

The people have spoken, Jonessaidon X, adding that the FIND OUT era of ***politics*** is just beginning, while Pearsoncommentedthe election results confirm that the voice of District 86 will not be silenced and the Tennessee GOP CAN T EXPEL A MOVEMENT!!

**Big Number**

More than $2 million. That s how much Pearson and Jones raised in combined campaign donations for the special election, the APreportedin July, based on donations from more than 70,000 donors across the country. Jones Republican opponent raised approximately $34,000, the APreports, with support from state Republican lawmakers, while Pearson s Independent rival raised less than $400.

**Key Background**

The Democratic lawmakers protest against gun violence took place days after theshootingat an elementary school in Nashville that killed three children and three adults. Protesters flooded the state Capitol building pushing for restrictions on firearms, and the legislators joined their cries and led the protest, brieflybreakingthe House s rules of decorum and using a bullhorn on the House floor. Tennessee House lawmakers hadpreviouslyonly expelled lawmakers a handful of times, including in 1980 and 2016, and six House lawmakers wereoustedin 1866 after opposing the ratification of the 14th Amendment. Pearson and Jones expulsion from the legislature became a national controversy, with President Joe Biden calling the move shocking and undemocratic as hemet withthe lawmakers at the White House weeks after their ouster. Senate Democratscalledfor the Justice Department to investigate the expulsions and whether it violated the lawmakers First Amendment rights and civil rights statutes, along with their constituents rights in removing their representation in the legislature. The DOJ has not yet commented on whether it s investigating the controversy.

**Further Reading**

Expelled Tennessee Representatives Vie For Full Reinstatement As Special Elections Commence(Forbes)

Tennessee House Expels 2 Democrats Over Gun Reform Protest(Forbes)

Tennessee Expulsions: Senate Democrats Reportedly Call For DOJ To Investigate(Forbes)

Justin Pearson Reinstated To Tennessee State House(Forbes)

Justin Pearson Could Rejoin Tennessee State House This Week After Expulsion Joining Justin Jones. Here s What To Know.(Forbes)

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