

# [***Senate Chaplain Urges Congress To Move Beyond Thoughts And Prayers After Nashville School Shooting***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WJ-6HC1-DXVP-5187-00000-00&context=1516831)

Forbes.com

March 28, 2023 Tuesday

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**Length:** 864 words

**Byline:** Sara Dorn, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Congressional Republicans have largely ruled out passing tighter gun laws after a shooter killed six people at a Tennessee elementary school this week.

**Body**

**Topline**

Senate Chaplain Barry Black called on lawmakers to move beyond thoughts and prayers, a day after Monday s school shooting in Nashville, as Republicans once again rebuff Democrats pleas for stricter gun controls in the wake of the 129th mass shooting in the U.S. this year.

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Senate Chaplain Barry Black

Senate Television via AP

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**Key Facts**

During his opening prayer before the Senate on Tuesday, Black said that when babies die at a church school, lawmakers need to act to prevent similar tragedies from happening in the future.

Black prayed for senators to avoid the paralysis of analysis that waits for the miraculous but the chaplain did not call for any specific legislative action.

Black, who was elected as chaplain by the GOP-controlled Senate in 2003 after he was nominated by a bipartisan search committee, opens each session of the Senate with a prayer and serves as a spiritual liaison for senators and their families.

Black rarely wades into ***politics***, theHuffington Post noted, but has urged Senators to seek compromise during times of political turmoil, including during the 2013 government shutdown and the 2020 impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump.

The statements follow pleas from Democrats for new gun controls following Tuesday s shooting at a private Christian school in Nashville that left three 9-year-olds and three adults dead.

Republicans, including House Majority LeaderSteve Scalise (La.)andReps. Tim Burchett (Tenn.) andByron Donalds(Fla.), are standing firm in their position that mass shootings can't be blamed on the availability of guns and have expressed opposition to any new gun restrictions.

**Further Viewing**

**What To Watch For**

Any push for stricter gun control measures is likely to stall in Congress, as Republicans control the House and Democrats have a narrow 51-49 Senate edge. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) said Tuesday the upper chamber is renewing its push to pass an assault weapons ban, though it is unlikely to be approved by the GOP-controlled House. Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffriestold PoliticoDemocrats are weighing legislative action on guns, without specifying what is being considered.

**Crucial Quote**

The first thing in any kind of tragedy that I do is I pray. I pray for the victims, I pray for their families. I really get angry when I see people trying to politicize it for their own personal agenda, Scalise said during a press conference on Tuesday. Scalise suggested that Congress should instead consider new mental health resources and tighter school security protocols, adding that the first thing [Democrats] talk about is taking guns away from law-abiding citizens, and that s not the answer, by the way.

**Chief Critic**

Democrats assailed Republicans for their refusal to act on gun legislation in the wake of Monday s shooting. Rep. Maxwell Frost (D-Fla.) called Republicans who are refusing to consider new gun controls cowards and accused them of being bought and paid for by the National Rifle Association in a floor speech on Tuesday.

**Key Background**

A 28-year-old suspect, Audrey Hale, fatally shot six people inside the Covenant School in Nashville on Monday morning before Hale was killed in a shootout with police, according to law enforcement officials. Police found three guns at the scene, including two AR-style guns, and said Tuesday that Hale bought seven guns legally in recent years at five stores. While the motive is unclear, police have described the shooting as a targeted attack and said Hale plotted the shooting by mapping entrances to the school and surveilling it in advance. Hale, a former student at the school, was under a doctor s care for an emotional disorder, authorities said, and shared what Hale described as a suicide note with a friend just before the shooting, Nashville s News Channel 5reported.

**Tangent**

The White House called on Congress to pass an assault weapons ban in the wake of Monday s school shooting in Nashville renewing a push that has repeatedly fizzled in Congress and faces even longer odds of passage now than it did in the previous session of Congress. Republicans expressed fatigue with Democrats calls for an assault weapons ban in the wake of Monday s shooting, with Sen. John Cornyn (R-Tex.) explaining that the GOP went as far as it is willing to go on tightening gun controls in passing the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act last year. The bill, the first major gun-control legislation in 30 years, strengthens background check requirements and provides funding for states to install red-flag laws. It also prevents those convicted of domestically abusing their dating partners from buying a gun. But some reforms backed by Democrats were omitted in order to gain enough GOP support to pass in the Senate, including the assault weapons ban.

**Further Reading**

Nashville Police Found And Shot Covenant School Suspect Within Minutes, Body Camera Footage Shows(Forbes)

White House Renews Calls For Assault Weapons Ban After Nashville Shooting Here s Why The Odds Of Passing The Bill Have Grown Even Slimmer(Forbes)

Nashville School Shooter Identified After Three Children And Three Adults Killed(Forbes)

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