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Leader Driskell on Tennessee Legislature Expelling Two Black Lawmakers

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – House Democratic Caucus Leader Fentrice Driskell (D-Tampa) issued the following statement:

“It is an affront to democracy that a duly elected representative can be removed for exercising their right to free speech. All Americans deserve the freedom to choose their representatives without the interference of MAGA bullies.

Let’s be clear: Justin Pearson and Justin Jones were expelled out of fear of the messengers and the message.

In Tennessee and across America, the GOP has no answer to the people demanding we take decisive action to stop the endless slaughter of our own people—our own classmates, neighbors, loved ones and friends. Their tired NRA-approved talking points are being drowned out by voices sick of senseless tragedy after senseless tragedy.

It’s so sad and frightening that the Tennessee legislature sees a breach decorum—an exercise of peaceful civil disobedience—as somehow worse than the heartbreakingly constant crisis of gun violence.

Clearly, this was a disproportional punishment. They wanted to silence and humble two young Black men who were standing up for their communities, but they have failed. There are, for now, two fewer voices for change in the Tennessee legislature, but this has galvanized thousands of voices across America who are angry, insulted, and ready for a change.

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