

AN OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR BILL LEE
FROM WILLIAMSON COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS AND
REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADERSHIP

July 12, 2023

Governor Bill Lee
Tennessee State Capitol, 1st Floor
600 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37243

RE: Special Session scheduled for August 21, 2023

Dear Governor Lee,

As a coalition of elected officials and community leaders in Williamson County, we are calling on you to reconsider the Special Session currently scheduled for August 21, 2023, and resume discussions about future legislation to create safer schools and communities during the regularly scheduled General Session in January 2024.

Among our main concerns:

- Regarding the tragedy at Covenant School this past March, there is still an ongoing investigation that has unanswered questions. Consequently, we request you allow the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department to complete its work so the public may have a better understanding of the root cause of this tragic event. Tennessee has always been a state at the forefront of embracing the values of Faith, Family, and Freedom. Let us allow for the facts to come forth, so we can ensure we are protecting these values and not inadvertently violating the constitutional rights so many have fought and sacrificed for to make this country and state what it is today.
- Regarding the current timing of the session, most, if not all, of our local public and private school students will have already been back in session for a couple of weeks. At this same time, university students will be preparing to start their fall semesters. After what we witnessed at the State Capitol this past March when activists sought disruption over productive conversations, we believe it would be in the best interest of our students and citizens to avoid what could potentially become a dangerous public safety situation. This is of even greater concern given the recent reports of activists training and preparing to travel to the area to create chaos and intimidate our state legislators.
- Regarding funding needed for the Special Session, do we know how much this will cost Tennessee taxpayers? As a fiscally conservative state government, any additional costs or resources required should be a consideration. This would include additional security, which to our understanding may include bringing back the TN National Guard from the current crisis at our US border.
- Finally, please consider the impact this may have on local law enforcement outside of the metro Nashville area. This would include the Williamson County hotel and hospitality district, as there is sure to be an overflow of individuals traveling from other parts of the state and country. Our law enforcement agencies work hard to keep our communities safe, so let us avoid placing additional stress on their already significant workload.

We encourage you to take time to fully consider the concerns we have presented, and additional time given to our legislators for all the facts of the Covenant tragedy to become known and considered before the next regularly scheduled General Session. This will allow them more time with constituents to discuss how together we can create safer communities. We should not allow agitators to control the narrative and promote an agenda that does not align with the will of the People of Tennessee.

The Honorable Governor Bill Lee

July 12, 2023

Page | 2

Most Respectfully,

Mary Smith

Williamson County Commissioner, 5th District

Greg Sanford

Williamson County Commissioner, 5th District

Gregg Lawrence

Williamson County Commissioner, 4th District

Christopher Richards

Williamson County Commission, 7th District

Cyndi Miller

State Executive Committeewoman, D-27
TNGOP

Dr. Tracy Miller

Williamson County Republican Party Chair

Elliott Franklin

Williamson County Republican Party 2nd Vice Chair

Courtney Laginess

Williamson County Republican Party Treasurer

Diane Chenard

Williamson County Republican Party Secretary

Kathy Danner

Williamson County Commissioner, 4th District
(2010 – 2018)

Dusty Rhoades

Williamson County Sheriff

Lisa Hayes Lenox

Williamson County Commissioner, 1st District

Pete Stresser

Williamson County Commissioner, 4th District

Barb Sturgeon

Williamson County Commissioner, 8th District

Romonte Hamer

Williamson County Young Republicans Chair

Hannah Tiblier

Williamson County Republican Party 1st Vice Chair

Brandon Bell

Williamson County Republican Party 3rd Vice Chair

Tim Raynaud

Williamson County Republican Asst. Treasurer

Christine Deekens

Williamson County Republican Party Asst Secretary

Debbie Deaver

Williamson County Republican Party Chair
(2017 – 2019)

Cc:

Senator Jack Johnson

Senator Joey Hensley

Representative Gino Bulso

Representative Jake McCalmon

Representative Sam Whitson

Representative Todd Warner