**AN OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR BILL LEE**

**FROM WILLIAMSON COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS AND**

**REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADERSHIP**

July 25, 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 25, 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)

**Senator Joey Hensley**

State of Tennessee, District 28

**Beverly Burger**

City of Franklin Alderman, Ward 1

**Robin Steenman**

Williamson Families Board, Chair

**Olivia Shupe**

Williamson Families Board, 2nd Vice Chair

Cc:

Senator Jack Johnson

Senator Joey Hensley

Representative Gino Bulso

**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)

**Representative Todd Warner**

State of Tennessee, District 92

**Steve Hickey**

Williamson Families Board, 1st Vice Chair

**Debbie Pace**

Williamson Families Board, Secretary

Representative Jake McCalmon

Representative Sam Whitson

Representative Todd Warner