



June 8, 2023

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

RE: Proposed Special Session  
Red Flag Legislation

Governor:

I hope this letter finds you well and enjoying a fun, albeit busy, summer. I will start with the caveat that I have not solicited any input or support from any other member of the General Assembly for this letter. Rather, I have drafted the same in response to the consistent and overwhelming sentiment of the people across my legislative district. The thoughts and opinions contained herein are mine, and mine alone.

When the General Assembly adjourned the 2023 legislative session on April 21st, I had not even made it to my home in Dickson before receiving notice that you intended to call a special session to push your proposed red flag law. You made your intentions official with your public announcement on May 8th. I have no doubt that you have since spent plenty of time talking directly to leaders in both chambers of the assembly gauging support for this and other proposals deemed by gun control activists as “common sense” legislation. Certainly, that is why you are calling members of the General Assembly to meet with you in person in small groups this summer.

I was pleased to receive the invitation to meet with you, and I am looking forward to having an opportunity to discuss with you the needs and concerns of the people in my district that have been overlooked for far too long. While I was assured by your staff that there would be “no agenda” for this meeting, it would seem reasonable for me to assume that the special session and your proposed red flag law will be front and center in our discussion. I can assure you that it has been a matter of great concern in every gathering I have attended throughout my district and beyond in recent weeks.

You stated in your public release on the special session, “[a]fter speaking with members of the General Assembly...there is broad agreement that action is needed.” The only broad agreement I have seen among the members of the General Assembly has been the rejection of your proposed legislation and the shared opinion that a special session on this subject matter is ill-advised and unnecessary. Outside of the Capitol there is broad agreement among the voters that both the special session and red flag laws are highly unpopular. Moreover, it is clear from recent media reports that there is an extremely high probability of organized demonstrations by passionate activists on both ends of the political spectrum. It is ironic that you intend to call a special session on public safety that will actually put public safety at risk in downtown Nashville.

I have received formal resolutions from the executive committees of all three county GOP chapters in my district opposing red flag laws, and specifically your proposed legislation. In fact,

it is my understanding that the Lewis County GOP was the first in Tennessee to issue a formal position statement on this matter. They have been joined by over 20 other GOP chapters across the state in firmly opposing what you are trying to do. That number continues to grow week by week. What is abundantly clear is that the vast majority of law-abiding, God-fearing Tennesseans DO NOT APPROVE of any variation of a red flag law, no matter what misleading moniker or marketing campaign that you might try to disguise it with.

While I do not envy the pressure that you must feel from the cries of some who have been calling for you to “do something” in the wake of a horrifying act of evil committed against innocent Christian children and adults by a disturbed transgender person, I encourage you to consider the difference between a response and a reaction. I urge you to prayerfully seek the wisdom to discern the sources of truth that you can trust and put your faith in.

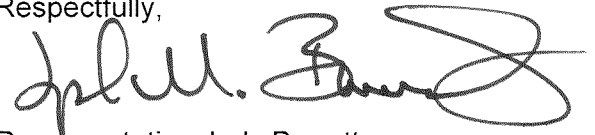
There are an opportunistic few who almost immediately seized on this terrible tragedy to promote their political ideology and personal profiles through intentionally divisive, repulsive, and completely inappropriate behavior. This vocal super minority stepped over the dead bodies of innocent children with their organized astroturfing to rob the Covenant families, the Nashville community, and the State of Tennessee of its moment to mourn and process together in peace. I submit that your special session will only serve to give this cadre of charlatans a stage and an audience to continue their exploitation of our State. Make no mistake these folks do not care about Tennessee or dead children. They care only about media coverage and winning political fights by whatever means necessary.

Jesus said anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. Those that seek to exploit the Covenant shooting for political purposes have not entered through the gate of honest and open legislative debate. Their policies have been soundly rejected by the flock through decades of lost elections by wide margins. The people of Tennessee have stated their position on the 2nd Amendment and gun control measures repeatedly...in the voting booth. We should not give the thieves a free pass around the gate to destroy our Constitutionally protected freedoms in a special session with suspended rules, a compressed timeframe, limited debate, and a controlled environment. That is not how good law is made.

At the end of the day, you have the Constitutional authority to call a special session. It is your decision, and yours alone, as to whether or not you determine it is necessary, wise and/or safe to do so. Nevertheless, whatever you decide it will be my honor to be present and prepared to represent the voice of the people of the 69th House District.

With kindest regards, I am

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jody Barrett', written in a cursive style.

Representative Jody Barrett  
House District 69

Cc: Speaker Cameron Sexton  
Majority Leader William Lamberth