

Chaos erupts at Tennessee Capitol over demand for gun control

Democratic lawmakers take to House floor with bullhorns, hundreds of protesters fill chambers



When Democrats do it, it's not an insurrection, just so you know. Tennessee State Troopers seem to have acquitted themselves well and regained control of the chamber rather quickly.

Sam Stockard writes in [Tennessee Lookout](#):

Three Democratic lawmakers on Thursday led an unprecedented

gun-control rally in the midst of the morning session as hundreds protested against gun violence outside the door three days after a mass shooting at The Covenant School.

Chaos erupted around 10:50 a.m. as the House voted on a bill dealing with expansion of the state's education savings account program when Rep. Justin Jones complained aloud to Speaker Cameron Sexton that his voting machine was turned off.

Sexton told Jones he was out of order, then called a five-minute recess. As Republican leaders huddled at Sexton's dais, Jones of Nashville and Reps. Justin J. Pearson of Memphis and Gloria Johnson of Knoxville went to the podium armed with a megaphone, leading chants such as "Gun control now!" with people in the balcony seating areas.

Republican and Democratic leaders went outside on the House balcony and huddled for more than 30 minutes before emerging.

Sexton, who had admonished the crowd to stay quiet, also had the House assistant clerk read the rules for voting because Jones and Pearson left their desks frequently during the morning session.

Shortly after 11:30, the House Republican Caucus exited the chamber to the outdoor balcony, possibly to vote on how to proceed.

When they returned, Speaker Sexton told House members he understood their "frustrations" but noted that how they expressed them Thursday morning wasn't "acceptable behavior." House Republican leaders declined to immediately sanction.

Once the House resumed its calendar, Republicans began to use a procedural maneuver to limit debate, leading Democratic Caucus Chairman John Ray Clemmons to ask

Republicans to allow discussion on significant bills.