

Lawmakers Condemn Political Violence as Probe into Trump Assassination Attempt Ramps Up

— Juliann Ventura, 7.18.2024



Senator Chris Murphy spoke about increasing measures to prevent the movement of fentanyl across the Mexico border into the U.S. at a press conference in Hartford, Aug. 30, 2022 (CT Examiner)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In the wake of the assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump, Connecticut’s federal lawmakers recently condemned political violence, with U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy saying that the country’s politics are “badly broken,” but “not unfixable” in a **thread** of posts on X on Sunday.

“When there isn’t enough to go around, each election feels super high stakes, with your side or the other side vying to control the limited resources for the non-elite,” Murphy wrote in a post. “That desperation turns quickly to violence.”

U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal and U.S. Reps. Jim Himes and Joe Courtney followed suit, condemning the assassination attempt that took place Saturday during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania. Their statements added to the growing calls of congressional members denouncing political violence as investigations into the shooting continue.

Blumenthal, who sits on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, applauded the committee for opening an investigation into the shooting, saying in a **post** on X that, “Congress has clear oversight and scrutiny.”

In a following **post**, he added, “Honoring the injured & killed means a full investigation.”

Tim Nichols, a research fellow and visiting professor at Duke University with more than two decades of experience in special operations, intelligence and counterterrorism, said the most pressing issue for criminal justice and intelligence professions is determining if this is the beginning of domestic crimes against candidates running for office. He said that “would be catastrophic for the United States.”

“In this case, now since something has happened, the prudent thing to do is for criminal justice professionals to go back and look at all of their indicators and all of the intelligence collection that they’ve had over the last couple months and see if there are any other similar trends that might result in the same type of behavior — an individual, whether it’s a lone wolf or a small group — that have decided that the election outcome or the political opposition is something that’s worthy of their violence,” Nichols said. “If that is the case, and if there are... other activities that are threatening any of our political candidates, that’s cause for great concern.”

However, there are still many unknowns, such as the shooter’s motivation for the attempted assassination and whether it was political in nature, said Joe Young, a professor in the justice, law and criminology department at

American University. Young shared concern for attacks against public officials.

“But the thing we can say is, there has been a **rise** in attacks on political officials and election officials and people connected with the political system ... so it’s a worrisome thing,” he said. “When you see the other side as an existential threat and you’re hearing from other political candidates that these people are trying to destroy your way of life and another pretty intense and violent rhetoric, it’s not surprising to me that we’d see these kind of one-off incidents where people try and assassinate a political candidate.”

Himes also alluded to certain rhetoric in a **post** on X on Sunday and called on the public to “resist nonsense.”

“Whatever the event, regardless of who wins or loses, EVERY citizen in a democracy has a responsibility to embrace facts and resist nonsense,” Himes wrote.

On Tuesday, Courtney referenced the phone call between Trump and President Joe Biden following the shooting as an example that political candidates with opposing views are not enemies.

“The fact that President Biden and former President Trump spoke personally after the attempted assassination is a small, but meaningful start that political rivals are not the enemy,” Courtney said in a **post** on X.

The day after the assassination attempt on Trump, Murphy began looking forward, asking “What do we do?”

“It is NOT too late to save our nation from this spiritual unspooling,” he **said** in a post. He went on to say that the public can choose to limit the means violence, build stronger communities and start “choosing leaders who don’t divide us,” among some other pieces of advice.

Nichols said the country tends to learn from failure, so a full investigation could shed light on the underlying problems.

“When the failure happens, we tend to look really, really hard at what we’ve been doing and discover that we didn’t have the right priorities, we’re not allocating resources in the right way, and have created some unintentional blind spots,” he said.

The FBI, U.S. Senate and House, and Homeland Security Department have opened **investigations** into the assassination attempt on Trump to examine potential motives, whether it was part of a broader plot, and security failures, particularly related to the Secret Service.

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