

87th Legislative District
Shelby County



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House of Representatives State of Tennessee

Hon. KAREN D. CAMPER
House Minority Leader

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August 26, 2024

Rep. Cameron Sexton, Speaker of the House
425 Rep. John Lewis Way
Suite 600; Cordell Hull Office Building
Nashville, TN 37243

Sen. Randy McNally, President of the Senate
425 Rep. John Lewis Way
Suite 700; Cordell Hull Office Building
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Speaker Sexton and President McNally,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent threats to withhold sales tax revenue from Shelby County should voters approve the upcoming ballot referendums aimed at improving safety in Memphis. These proposals represent the will of the people, and their intent is clear: to protect and enhance the safety of our communities. Threatening to punish an entire county for exercising its democratic right is not only unprecedented but sets a dangerous precedent.

Shelby County, as the largest county in Tennessee, contributes significantly to our state's economy. Last year alone, Shelby County generated nearly \$2 billion in sales tax revenue, a substantial portion of which bolsters the state's budget and supports services that benefit all Tennesseans. To suggest that these vital funds could be withheld over a local decision aimed at ensuring public safety is shortsighted and counterproductive.

Our constituents' safety and their perception of safety must take precedence over the special interests of the gun lobby. The proposed measures—banning unpermitted handguns, restricting assault rifles, and implementing a "red flag" law—are not radical. They are common-sense initiatives that reflect the growing concern among Memphis residents about the rising violence and the proliferation of firearms in our communities. These proposals are designed to save lives, reduce crime, and create an environment where people feel secure in their homes, schools, and public spaces.

Let us not lose sight of our primary responsibility as elected officials: to protect and serve the people of Tennessee. The safety of our citizens should never be compromised or held hostage by threats of financial retribution. I urge you to reconsider any plans to withhold sales tax revenue from Shelby County and instead focus on working together to ensure that all Tennesseans—regardless of where they live—can live in a safe and secure environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Karen D. Camper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "K" and "C".

Hon. Karen D. Camper
State Representative, District 87
House Minority Leader

Cc: Hon. Jonathan Skrmetti, Tennessee Attorney General
Hon. Kristen Clarke, Assistant United States Attorney General, Civil Rights Division