

UPDATED: Scalise Will Survive Assassination Attempt, Shooter Has Died

President Donald Trump addressed the nation shortly after 11:30 a.m. EDT from the White House regarding an apparent attempt to assassinate Republican members of Congress earlier in the day.

The president said:

As you all know, shortly after 7:00 a.m. this morning, a gunman opened fire on members of Congress and their staffs as they were practicing for tomorrow's annual charity baseball game.

Authorities are continuing to investigate the crime, and the assailant has now died from his injuries. The FBI is leading the investigation and will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available.

Congressman Steve Scalise, a member of House leadership, was shot and badly wounded, and is now in stable condition at the hospital, along with two very courageous Capitol Police officers. At least two others were also wounded.

Many lives would have been lost if not for the heroic actions of the two Capitol Police officers who took down the gunman despite sustaining gunshot wounds during a very, very brutal assault.

Melania and I are grateful for their heroism and praying for the swift recovery of all victims.

Congressman Scalise is a friend, and a very good friend. He's a patriot and he's a fighter. He will recover from this assault. And, Steve, I want you to know that you have

the prayers not only of the entire city behind you, but of an entire nation and, frankly, the entire world. America is praying for you and America is praying for all of the victims of this terrible shooting.

I spoke with Steve's wife, Jennifer, and I pledged to her our full and absolute support—anything she needs. We are with her and with the entire Scalise family.

I have also spoken with Chief Matthew Verderosa—he's doing a fantastic job—of the Capitol Police to express our sympathies for his wounded officers and to express my admiration for their courage. Our brave Capitol Police perform a challenging job with incredible skill, and their sacrifice makes democracy possible.

We also commend the brave first responders from Alexandria Police, Fire and Rescue who rushed to the scene. Everyone on that field is a public servant—our courageous police, our congressional aides who work so tirelessly behind the scenes with enormous devotion, and our dedicated members of Congress who represent our people.

We may have our differences, but we do well, in times like these, to remember that everyone who serves in our nation's capital is here because, above all, they love our country.

We can all agree that we are blessed to be Americans, that our children deserve to grow up in a nation of safety and peace, and that we are strongest when we are unified and when we work together for the common good.

Please take a moment today to cherish those you love, and always remember those who serve and keep us safe. God bless them all, God bless you, and God Bless America.

You can watch his speech in the video clip below. In the clip above, watch continued live coverage of the aftermath of the shooting.

FBI Agent in Charge for the District of Columbia Tim Slater, which has taken over the lead role in the investigation, suggested it was "too early to tell" if the shooting was indeed an assassination attempt. Members of Congress who witnessed the shooting, however, say Republicans were specifically being targeted, regardless of how the bureau wants to designate it.

Urgent prayers are needed for everyone involved.

The shooting took place in Alexandria, Virginia, across the Potomac River from our nation's capital, shortly after 7 a.m. Wednesday. Republican members of Congress were taking part in a practice for the popular congressional charity baseball game when the gunman, who was also shot in a shootout with security personnel, opened fire. Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-S.C., said he was leaving the practice early when a man he believes was the shooter asked whether or not the members of Congress were Republicans or Democrats.

Duncan had left by the time "dozens of shots" were fired. Rep. Mo Brooks, R-Ala., said 50-100 shots were fired, and five people were hit.

"After the first dozen shots or so there was a lot of hollering," Brooks said. "He was making his way to the dugout."

House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La., was shot in the hip, while an aide to Rep. Roger Williams, R-Texas, was reportedly shot in the chest. Brooks said there was significant blood loss, while Brad Wenstrup, R-Ohio—who is a physician—said he treated his colleague, noting he was "conscious and OK."

Scalise was airlifted to a nearby hospital, and has since been taken into emergency surgery. At approximately 9:30 a.m., his office released the following statement:

This morning, at a practice for the Congressional Baseball

Game, Whip Scalise was shot in the hip. He was transported to MedStar Washington Hospital Center, where he is currently undergoing surgery. He is in stable condition.

Prior to entering surgery, the whip was in good spirits and spoke to his wife by phone. He is grateful for the brave actions of the U.S. Capitol Police, first responders and colleagues.

"We ask that you keep the whip and others harmed in this incident in your thoughts and prayers."

No other conditions have been reported. Two Capitol Police officers who were part of Scalise's security detail were also shot. Several other Republican members of Congress were at the practice and scattered, taking shelter in nearby homes, once the first shots rang out.

"I think we're lucky that Scalise was there because this was his security detail, without them it would have been a massacre," Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., told FOX News.

"Nobody would have survived without Capitol Hill Police," he also told CNN. "They saved everybody's life."

Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ark., noted that several of his colleagues were heroes, too. As soon as the gunfire started, they quickly grabbed the 10-year-old son of Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, who had been helping out with the practice, and shielded him in a dugout.

"Joe Barton's boy was here, 10-year-old, just shagging balls, and we got him into the dugout and stuffed him under the bench," he said.

House Republican Study Committee Chairman Mark Walker, R-N.C., said he was "shaken but OK." He said the gunman was clearly targeting Republicans and wanted to kill as many as he could.

"Please pray for Rep. Steve Scalise and others shot at our

baseball practice this morning for our charity game tomorrow evening," he tweeted. "The Capitol Police saved many lives this morning from a shooter who had obviously planned to kill many Republican members."

Democrats, who were practicing at another field a few miles away, held a moment of prayer for those affected once they heard the news.

The FBI has not yet released the name of the shooter, but media reports suggest he is James T. Hodgkinson, 66, of Belleville, Ill., who was a Bernie Sanders supporter in 2016 and, based on his social media footprint, "hated the president." The president said he died as a result of his wounds during the shootout with Scalise's Capitol Police security detail.

Sanders issued a statement acknowledging Hodgkinson actually worked on his failed presidential campaign last year. He said he was sickened by the events that unfolded in Alexandria. In a tweet, he said "the violence must end."

"I have just been informed that the alleged shooter at the Republican baseball practice is someone who apparently volunteered on my presidential campaign," he said. "I am sickened by this despicable act. Let me be as clear as I can be. Violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society, and I condemn this action in the strongest possible terms."

White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer alerted the media shortly after 8 a.m. that both the president and vice president were aware of the developing situation in Virginia, stating the White House's thoughts and prayers were with all affected. Shortly after 8:30 a.m., the White House released the following statement from President Donald Trump:

The vice president and I are aware of the shooting incident in Virginia and are monitoring developments closely. We are deeply saddened by this tragedy. Our thoughts and prayers

are with the members of Congress, their staffs, Capitol Police, first responders and all others affected.

Vice President Mike Pence has cancelled a scheduled appearance for later in the day with the National Association of Homebuilders. He was instead heading directly to the White House to stay briefed on the situation in Alexandria. The president's visit to the Department of Labor has been cancelled, and nearly all House of Representatives activities were postponed.

The House convened briefly at noon for speeches from Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Keep checking back for the latest updates in this developing story.

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