

House Censures Rep. Al Green as Democrats Face Fallout From Trump Protest

Texas lawmaker interrupted president's address in protest of possible Medicaid cuts

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WASHINGTON—House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries warned fellow Democrats ahead of [President Trump's speech](#): Whatever you do, don't create a spectacle. Democrats then created a spectacle, and Republicans are now making them pay a political price.

Four minutes into [Trump's address](#) Tuesday, it was clear that Jeffries's guidance wasn't being heeded. Rep. Al Green of Texas stood up and shouted "no mandate to cut Medicaid!" while waving his cane at the president. After several warnings, he was then removed from the chamber.

Green was censured by the Republican-led House in a 224-198 vote Thursday morning, giving Democrats the kind of political black eye their leaders were hoping to avoid. Ten Democrats joined all Republicans in backing the resolution. Green and one other Democrat voted present.

Speaker Mike Johnson (R., La.) had dared Democrats to join Republicans on the censure vote, calling Green's actions "shameful and egregious." Democrats countered that Republicans had staged their own disruptions during Democratic presidents' speeches and didn't face censure. Censure carries no practical weight but is the highest form of discipline by the House short of expulsion.

Green, 77 years old, is a longtime antagonist of Trump and a loud advocate for trying to impeach the president. The Democratic lawmaker, who represents a Houston-area district, said he would have done it again.

"I didn't do it to get anybody else to join me. I believe that on some issues, it's better to stand alone," he said. "I'm willing to suffer the consequences for my actions," he said.

After the vote, Green presented himself in the well for the formal censure. As Johnson started to read it, Green and other Democrats began singing “We Shall Overcome,” drowning out the speaker. Johnson then put the session into recess.

Soon after the vote, Republicans said they would also move to strip Green of his committee assignments.

Democrats had been getting some of their mojo back in recent weeks, with [voter demonstrations at town halls](#) putting Republicans on the defensive on issues like healthcare and the economy. But lawmakers said Tuesday’s display showed that they still have work to do in uniting behind a coherent message and coalescing around colleagues who will lead their pushback to Trump.

After Green was ejected Tuesday, other Democrats interrupted Trump by yelling “January 6th” and “lies!” Many sat grimly as Trump led a Republican celebration of all the ways the president has rolled over Democrats in the first seven weeks of his second term. Some held up signs that read “False” or “Musk steals.”

Democrats are caught between calls to fiercely fight Trump at every turn—or standing back and hoping Trumpism sinks under its own weight.

“We have to get away from some of the performative actions of fighting back and providing our constituents with the answers,” said Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D., N.M.). “Folks are hurting on a variety of different levels,” he said, adding that tariffs are expected to hit his district along the U.S.-Mexico border.

While some Democrats said Jeffries made the right call in directing caucus members to bite their tongues, others argued that he lacked a strong strategy. Moderate House Democrats grumbled about the antics of left-wing members, while some Democratic senators criticized the protests.

“A sad cavalcade of self owns and unhinged petulance,” said Sen. John Fetterman (D., Pa.) on X.

Jeffries declined to directly answer questions Thursday about Democrats’ actions at the Trump speech. Of the president, he said, Democrats are “going to continue to stop him in the Congress, stop him in the courts, stop him in the community.”

Multiple GOP members had scrambled to lead the resolution against Green. Rep. Dan Newhouse of Washington, a battleground Republican who previously voted to impeach Trump over his involvement in the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol attack, ended up leading the effort.

“This was beyond the pale,” Newhouse said of Green’s actions.

Democrats who participated in other protests at the speech defended their behavior.

Rep. Greg Casar (D., Texas), the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, which distributed signs that some Democrats held, said Wednesday that the signs “fit very squarely within” the guidance from Jeffries and others to focus on the Trump administration’s attacks on social-safety-net programs and tax cuts that will benefit the wealthy.

“We made a decision to maintain the decorum, and we did with one exception,” Rep. John Garamendi (D., Calif.) said Wednesday. “The reality is, we’re going to push back on this.”

Republicans have staged their own protests. Reps. Lauren Boebert (R., Colo.) and Marjorie Taylor Greene (R., Ga.) repeatedly interrupted then-President [Joe Biden](#) during [his 2022 State of the Union address](#).

Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D., Pa.), one of the Democrats who voted to censure Green on Thursday, said she told Johnson it was hypocritical for Republicans to not face similar consequences for their outbursts.

“At some point this foolishness has to stop, and we have to hold each other accountable and we can’t be picking and choosing” who gets disciplined, she said. “Rules are rules.”

Once rare, the use of [censure resolutions](#) by the majority party to punish the minority has become common practice in the House.

A Democratic-led House [censured](#) Rep. Paul Gosar (R., Ariz.) over a violent video he posted in 2021. A GOP-led House then censured three Democrats—Adam Schiff of California, Rashida Tlaib of Michigan and Jamaal Bowman of New York—in 2023. Those censures were related to allegations made about Trump and Russia, comments about Israel, and a pulled fire alarm, respectively.