

2 dead as far-right shooter targets Democratic state legislators in Minnesota

Kevin Reed
15 June 2025

On Saturday morning, two prominent state Democratic Party figures in Minnesota and their spouses were shot in a targeted attack.

The suspect, 57-year-old Vance Boelter, fled after an apparent exchange of gunfire with police, prompting authorities to warn residents to remain vigilant and secure their homes. Boelter was arrested on Sunday evening, near a property he owns in Green Isle, a small town in a rural area an hour southwest of the Twin Cities.

Law enforcement officials have described the shootings as a targeted assassination, with Governor Tim Walz, a Democrat, calling the attacks “politically motivated” and “targeted political violence.”

The violence began in the early hours of Saturday, June 14, with successive attacks at the homes of two Minnesota lawmakers.

State Senator John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette, were shot at their home in Champlin, a suburb north of Minneapolis. Both survived and underwent surgery for gunshot wounds. Yvette Hoffman reportedly shielded their daughter, Hope, during the attack.

The attacker moved on to fatally shoot State Representative Melissa Hortman, the leading Democrat in the Minnesota House, and her husband, Mark, at their residence in Brooklyn Park.

Authorities believe Boelter, dressed as a police officer, approached the lawmakers’ homes under the guise of law enforcement. The two residences are located about five miles apart, indicating a premeditated plan to target multiple individuals in a single night.

After the shooting of the Hoffmans, Brooklyn Park police decided to visit the Hortman residence and encountered Boelter coming out of it. He engaged in a gunfight with officers before fleeing on foot, leaving

behind a vehicle and a cache of weapons and other evidence.

Boelter has a background that combines Christian evangelical fervor and far-right ideology with work for a security company that specializes in “police-type vehicles” and gear. He was known as an evangelist who had traveled to Africa for missionary work.

In sermons and social media posts, he criticized American values, particularly on issues of sexual orientation. He was a vocal opponent of abortion rights. Friends described him as conservative and a Trump supporter, though none reported any prior animosity toward the lawmakers he targeted.

Authorities searching Boelter’s vehicle found a “hit list” with nearly 70 names, mostly Democratic politicians and abortion rights advocates, including high-profile figures such as Democratic Party Representative Ilhan Omar and Senator Tina Smith. Some had home addresses, indicating that Boelter had meticulously planned a night-long rampage of assassinations.

The car contained survival gear and fliers connected to the “No Kings” protests on Saturday, suggesting that Boelter may have been planning a homicidal attack on the protests. Police said they were also investigating whether he used a latex mask, based on surveillance video images, to further disguise himself during the attacks.

Despite his right-wing views and support for Trump, official records show a 2019 appointment to a state advisory board that listed Boelter with “no party preference,” indicating a concealed or, at least, contradictory personal and political background.

The shootings have drawn comments from both Democratic and Republican leaders, who have called for calm and unity in the face of escalating political

violence. Governor Walz urged Minnesotans to stand together against hate. He also called on protesters to cancel the anti-Trump dictatorship demonstrations called for Saturday in Minneapolis, a call that was largely ignored. Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar made multiple appearances on news programs in which she expressed her gratitude to law enforcement.

For his part, President Trump issued a statement condemning the violence but, of course, not acknowledging any connection between his own rhetoric and policies and the rising tide of political violence against his opponents in the US. Trump called for “law and order” and denounced the shootings as “un-American.”

Democratic leaders have refused to assign responsibility for the murderous rampage to Trump or the White House. Their statements have focused on unity and the need to condemn political violence regardless of who is targeted and who is responsible for it. The Democrats shrink from addressing the role of incitement by Trump and his fascist supporters.

The Minnesota shootings took place amidst the rising use of violence, including the mass raids by immigration police and repression against critics of the Trump administration. In an overt attempt to silence opposition to Trump’s fascist agenda, on Thursday, Senator Alex Padilla (D-California) was attacked by the security team of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem during a press conference in Los Angeles.

According to reporting by the *Independent*, Padilla was brought to the press conference by FBI agents, who escorted him into the room where Noem was addressing the media. She praised Trump’s mobilization of the National Guard and the Marines onto the streets of LA as necessary to “liberate” California from the “socialists” who supposedly run the state and city. When Padilla began to ask a question of Noem, he was set upon by Noem’s security team and FBI agents, whisked out of the room, dropped to the floor and handcuffed.

All of this was omitted from the official White House narrative, which claimed that no one knew who Senator Padilla was and that he threatened the Department of Homeland Security secretary. This has been proven to be a complete falsification.

The attack on Padilla is of a piece with the methods deployed by the Trump administration to suppress

dissent and silence anyone who challenges the administration’s policies.

Donald Trump’s repeated use of ad hominem attacks and derogatory nicknames—such as referring to California Governor Gavin Newsom as “Gavin Newscum” and ridiculing Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, who ran as Kamala Harris’s vice-presidential candidate in 2024—highlights the normalization of political violence as an instrument of American politics.

On the NBC News program *Meet the Press* on Sunday morning, moderator Kristen Welker questioned California Democratic Senator Adam Schiff about the attacks on the Minnesota Democrats. Schiff responded, “We must condemn political violence no matter who the target is.”

A minute later, he was asked about Israel’s unprovoked attack on Iran and said, “First of all, Israel has a right to defend itself and I support what Israel is doing to defend itself.”

With these words, he defended Israel’s assassination of six nuclear scientists and 20 high-ranking military personnel, showing that for US imperialist politicians, criticism of political violence stops at the water’s edge.

The attacks on Minnesota lawmakers are not isolated events or the work simply of a mentally or emotionally unstable individual, but part of a pattern in which violence and the threat of violence are used to silence dissent and consolidate power in the US.

The events in Minnesota are not merely a local tragedy, but a warning of the consequences of unchecked reaction and the need for a mass movement of the working class against fascism, violence and the destruction of democratic rights.



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