

Charlie Kirk's killing in Utah should horrify every American. Instead, for too many, it will simply fade into the noise of our toxic politics — just another grim entry in the ever-growing ledger of politically motivated bloodshed.

We've seen this movie before. A public figure is attacked. Politicians deliver solemn statements about unity. Calls for civility echo for a few days. And then? The anger simmers, the threats keep coming, and we wait for the next bullet to find its target.

Kirk, 31, was a sharp-edged conservative activist and a close ally of Donald Trump. His politics were polarizing, yes — but his death by gunfire is not about whether you agreed with him. It's about whether we, as a society, still believe in settling our political differences with ballots instead of bullets.

Charlie Kirk, husband, father, friend, American, has been assassinated. His spirit, passion and message will live on. Prayers for his soul and his wife and children. pic.twitter.com/bGlimCVY3f

— Dr. Phil (@DrPhil) [September 10, 2025](#)

Former Rep. Gabby Giffords, who nearly died from an assassin's bullet in 2011, understands the stakes better than anyone. She has spent over a decade urging Americans to reject violent extremism. Her pleas have gone largely unanswered. In that time, we've seen a Minnesota state legislator killed, a governor's family targeted in an arson attack, and a string of assassination attempts on Trump himself. Both Democrats and Republicans have been in the crosshairs.

This is not just about famous names. Judges are being stalked and threatened. Public

servants are enduring “swatting” hoaxes. The poisonous rhetoric that saturates our politics is now too often finding its way into the real world, in the form of actual violence.

We are normalizing the unthinkable.

The death of Charlie Kirk will not be the last if we remain locked in this cycle. The leaders who rush to issue statements now — as House Majority Leader Steve Scalise did this week, himself a survivor of political gunfire — must do more than express outrage. Words are easy; action is hard.

That action must begin with both parties acknowledging an uncomfortable truth: the threat is not “the other side.” The threat is the dangerous idea — now spreading in America — that political enemies should be eliminated rather than debated.

We cannot legislate our way out of that belief. We can only reject it, relentlessly, together, until the idea itself becomes politically toxic.

Until then, the next name added to this list will not be a surprise. It will just be the next headline.