

Rep. Davis at bat when gunfire erupts at House of Reps' baseball practice, congressmen react

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis, R-Ill., had a bat in hand practicing for the annual House of Representatives' charity baseball game at a park in Alexandria, Va., when a gunman erupted with fire, wounding a top-ranking congressman and multiple others.

Louisiana Congressman Steve Scalise underwent surgery for a gunshot to the hip and MedStar Washington said in a tweet Wednesday afternoon that Scalise "was critically injured." It provided no further details about him.

Capitol Police officers in his security detail wounded the shooter, who eventually died from the shots. Two of those officers were also wounded and both are expected to recover.

The fifth person wounded in the shooting in Alexandria, Virginia, on Wednesday morning was a former congressional aide, who now works for Tyson Foods.

Davis described the act as his "breaking point" and said this type of thing has to be stopped. The congressman also said he never thought he would go to baseball practice and be shot at. "When you go to baseball practice for a charity and have to dodge bullets, then watch your colleague lie in the field, it's a breaking point. Hate has to stop."

The shooter - James T. Hodgkinson - was a Belleville native with a long case history with law enforcement.

Hodgkinson's record shows battery, obstructing a peace officer, battery/causing bodily harm and a variety of traffic offenses, including Driving Under the Influence. The gunman also had a long history of lashing out at Republicans and once frightened a neighbor by firing a rifle into a field behind his Illinois house.

Hodgkinson was a member of a Facebook group called "[Terminate the Republican Party](#)," a fact that seemed to take on new meaning in light of an account from South Carolina Rep. Jeff Duncan, who said that as he was preparing to leave the baseball field, a man politely asked him whether it was a Democrat or Republican team before quietly walking off.

Until recently, it is reported Hodgkinson ran a home-inspection business out of his house. His Facebook page shows that he was a fan of Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, an independent who last year made an unsuccessful presidential bid. Sanders acknowledged Wednesday that Hodgkinson had apparently been among many volunteers on his 2016 campaign.

U.S. Rep. John Shimkus, R-Collinsville, R-Illinois-15, has played in the game many times but was not present at the time of the shooting. He is close friends with Scalise, who shares a townhouse at the U.S. Capitol with him.

Shimkus released the following statement regarding the shooting at this morning's practice for the annual Congressional Baseball Game for charity. The congressman was not at practice today.

"My prayers are with my good friend and DC roommate, Steve Scalise, as well as the Capitol Police officers, Members, staff and all those affected by today's shooting.

"While we don't yet fully know the motive behind this shameful act of evil, there is no doubt the heroism of the Capitol Police saved lives this morning. I am deeply thankful for their bravery, and I hope for speedy recoveries for all those wounded in this cowardly assault."

[U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin \(D-IL\) issued the following statement Wednesday](#) after the shootings:

"Our hearts go out to the victims of a tragic shooting this morning," he said. "We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the United States Capitol Police who put their lives on the line this morning and each and every day to keep members, staff, and visitors safe."