News




Police deploy as a manhunt is underway for a shooter that targeted two state lawmakers, in Brooklyn Park, Minn. on June 14. Minnesota State Rep. Melissa Hortman and her husband were shot and killed;  State Sen. John Hoffman and his wife were each shot multiple times and underwent surgery at a hospital. (AP/Tim Sullivan)

Joe Ruff/The Catholic Spirit

View Author Profile

OSV News

View Author Profile

## Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

St. Paul, Minn. — June 14, 2025
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Democratic State Rep. Melissa Hortman, who once taught Sunday school at St. Timothy in Blaine, Minnesota, and was a speaker of the Minnesota House, and her husband, Mark, were shot and killed in their home early Saturday (June 14) in what Gov. Tim Walz said "appears to be a politically motivated assassination."

Before the Hortmans were killed, Democratic State Sen. John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette, were each shot multiple times in nearby Champlin. They underwent surgery and Walz said he was "cautiously optimistic" they would survive.

Fr. Joseph Whelan, pastor of St. Timothy, said the Hortmans were not currently listed as parishioners. But Melissa Hortman's parents were active in the parish before they moved out of the area, and people recall Melissa Hortman teaching Sunday school perhaps 25 years ago, Whelan said.

Melissa Hortman

Portrait of Minnesota State Rep. Melissa Hortman, in an undated handout photo (OSV News/Minnesota House of Representatives, handout via Reuters)

Archbishop Bernard Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis issued a statement calling for prayers for those killed and injured and for law enforcement, and for civility in all discourse.

"I ask all people of goodwill to join me in prayer for the repose of the souls of Minnesota House Speaker-Emerita Melissa Hortman and her husband, along with prayers of recovery for Senator John Hoffman and his wife," the archbishop said.

"I also ask you to pray for the members of law enforcement who are putting themselves at risk hunting down the person, or people, who inflicted this violence and terrorized communities," he continued. "There is absolutely no reason for someone to commit such senseless violence on anyone, particularly those who are

involved in public service."

Police first responded at about 2 a.m. June 14 to a report of Hoffman and his wife being shot in. Out of caution, police checked on the Hortmans and confronted the suspect, who was impersonating a police officer and driving what appeared to be a police SUV with emergency lights. They exchanged gunfire, the gunman retreated into the home and fled on foot out a back door, officials said.

A manhunt for the suspect was underway June 14 with multiple law enforcement agencies involved, including Brooklyn Park police, the FBI, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and Hennepin County Sheriff's Office.

At a June 14 news conference, Walz said the state has lost a great leader and "I lost one of the dearest of friends."

Jason Adkins, executive director and general counsel of the Minnesota Catholic Conference, said in a June 14 statement that he was "deeply saddened and angered by the cold-blooded assassination" of Hortman and her husband and the attempted murder of Hoffman and his wife.

"Serving in a position of leadership requires making difficult choices and sticking to one's word, while not abandoning one's principles. I can personally attest from working with Representative Hortman that she was such a leader," he said. "We disagreed on key issues but still found opportunities to collaborate and solve difficult problems that mattered to Minnesotans generally and Catholics, specifically. We will be praying for the repose of her soul."

"Senator Hoffman is a champion of vulnerable people in our communities and is a person of deep conviction. He is also a friend. Minnesota cannot afford to lose his presence in state government and our staff is praying fervently for him and for his family," Adkins continued.

In his June 14 statement, Hebda said that "it is wrong for our elected representatives to have to live in fear of violence and we must do everything in our power to regain a sense of civility in our discourse, especially when we disagree," adding that "we cannot maintain our representative republic if our lawmakers fear violence for themselves and their family members."

Advertisement

"The Catholic bishops of Minnesota and I met annually with Speaker-Emerita Hortman and I knew her to be an honorable public servant. Although we disagreed on some issues, we worked collaboratively to find common ground on others in pursuit of the common good," Hebda said in his statement.

"Senator Hoffman is always generous with his time, as well, meeting with the bishops whenever they are at the Capitol. He is a strong advocate for the most vulnerable, and Minnesota continues to need his leadership," the archbishop wrote.

"Resorting to violence in public life is never acceptable and begets more violence. Unfortunately, we, as a society, have increasingly embraced violence as a means of solving problems because we have lost a sense of the dignity of every human person created in the image and likeness of God," Adkins said in his statement. "Until we recover a deeper sense of our common humanity and fraternity, we will continue to see the collapse of both civic discourse and the ability of our political process to mediate conflict and achieve the common good."

A manifesto was found in the suspect's vehicle that identified "many lawmakers and other officials," said Brooklyn Park Police Chief Mark Bruley, at the June 14 news conference with Walz and other officials. The Associated Press cited sources as identifying the suspect as 57-year-old Vance Boelter.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, the Minnesota State Patrol urged people not to attend planned "No Kings" rallies at the State Capitol and other sites across Minnesota "out of an abundance of caution." The June 14 rallies were billed as a national day of peaceful protest against the Trump administration.

"At this time of fear and uncertainty, we need to rely even more on our loving God and that begins with prayer — both privately and communally," Hebda's statement concluded. "May the Prince of Peace lead us away from such senseless violence".