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Charlie Kirk, Turning Point USA Founder, Killed in Utah Shooting That Stuns Nation

Charlie Kirk, 31, was fatally shot during an outdoor event at Utah Valley University on Sept. 10. The TPUSA founder, known for mobilizing young conservatives, was rushed to a hospital after being struck in the neck. A suspect is in custody.

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Charlie Kirk.

OREM, Utah — Charlie Kirk, the 31-year-old founder of Turning Point USA (TPUSA), died on Wednesday shortly after being shot during an outdoor event at Utah Valley University, according to several sources, including President Trump, the Washington Post and the New York Times.

The incident, which occurred around 12:20 p.m. MDT at Kirk's "American Comeback Tour," has shocked the nation, prompting bipartisan calls to end political violence. Kirk was struck in the

neck by a shot fired from a building approximately 200 yards away, per campus officials. A suspect is in custody, though initial reports of a detained individual were clarified, with the suspect's identity still under investigation, according to the Deseret News. Kirk was rushed to a hospital, where he died.

"The Great, and even Legendary, Charlie Kirk, is dead. No one understood or had the Heart of the Youth in the United States of America better than Charlie. He was loved and admired by ALL, especially me. and now, he is no longer with us. Melania and my Sympathies go out to his beautiful wife Erika, and family. We love you!" President Trump wrote on Truth Social.

Through TPUSA, founded in 2012, Kirk has transformed conservative activism on college campuses, establishing chapters at over 800 universities. His events, including the "Prove Me Wrong" debates and Student Action Summit, promote free-market principles and free speech, drawing thousands of students but also protests over his provocative style. Critics argue he fuels division, while supporters credit him with energizing young conservatives. "Kirk was speaking to students from an outdoor tent when he was shot," said Aubrey Laitsch, TPUSA's public relations manager, in a statement to the Associated Press. The university locked down its campus and canceled classes, with students describing chaos as attendees fled. The shooting has drawn widespread condemnation.

The shooting was universally condemned by Republicans, with Democratic leaders also denouncing the attack. Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries stated, "Political violence is NEVER acceptable. My thoughts and prayers are with Charlie Kirk and his family." California Governor Gavin Newsom called the incident "disgusting, vile, and reprehensible," while Senator Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) described it as "awful," noting the rising threat of political violence.

Kirk's influence extended beyond campuses, with TPUSA playing a pivotal role in mobilizing youth support for Trump's 2024 campaign. His 2016 Republican National Convention speech, declaring "Big government sucks," launched him into the national spotlight. The shooting follows other acts of political violence, including a 2024 attack at a Trump rally, heightening fears about escalating tensions. "The shot came kind of straight at him," said former Utah lawmaker Tara Sute, a witness, to The Hill. Videos show Kirk recoiling, with blood on his neck, as panic ensued. A TPUSA spokesperson told Wikipedia, "It doesn't look good."

Public reaction has been marked by shock, with social media reflecting prayers for Kirk and concerns about political violence.