

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942849  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0033  
(916) 319-2033  
FAX (916) 319-2133

DISTRICT OFFICE  
15900 SMOKETREE STREET, ROOM 125  
HESPERIA, CA 92345  
(760) 244-5277  
FAX (760) 244-5447

Assembly  
California Legislature



**TIM DONNELLY**  
ASSEMBLYMAN, THIRTY-THIRD DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
VICE CHAIR: ELECTIONS AND  
REDISTRICTING  
APPROPRIATIONS  
ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY AND  
TOXIC MATERIALS  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT  
RULES

Honorable Rick Perry  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Dear Governor Perry,

I am writing you after hearing of a horrific tragedy in your state, where two year-old Alexandra Hill died after being removed from her home by Child Protective Service (CPS). CPS, as an arm of the state charged with protecting the welfare of children, instead placed the child in the custody of foster parents (strangers to this child). Instead of being more fit than her natural parents, these foster parents demonstrated a criminal disregard for Alexandra's welfare, resulting in the death of this innocent child.

As a State Assemblyman, I have led the charge in California to investigate and reform the way that Child Protective Service agencies operate in our state. We had a similar case here, where CPS literally snatched a child from his loving Mother's arms because she wanted a second opinion before making an important medical decision. Fortunately this mother had the presence of mind to set up a video camera, and we were able to exert enough pressure to get the Government out of their lives. Too many children are removed for trivial and arbitrary reasons, wreaking havoc in countless families, and permanently scarring these children for life as they bounce from one stranger's home to the next. Focusing on caseload quotas in pursuit of federal funding has redirected the attention of these agencies from children at risk of imminent criminal neglect or abuse to those in unconventional, but functioning, families. CPS has therefore put at risk tens of thousands of children who truly need their help.

In California, the Legislature has approved a full scale audit into the seizure practices of these agencies, and is also investigating to whom they are accountable when they exercise the unlimited emergency powers we have entrusted them. Our goal is to reform these agencies through a package of legislation and return them to the original mission of protecting children at risk rather than endangering them.

What we are grappling with is a deeply personal, intimate form of tyranny when the Government has the absolute power to arbitrarily seize your most precious possession, your children, and give them to complete strangers without so much as a court hearing. Only when a tragedy occurs does anyone pay attention to one of the fastest-growing threats to individual liberty and parental rights.

Governor, if there is any way that we can help you in Texas as you grapple with this critical issue, it would be my honor to share with you what we've learned and how we intend to rectify the abuses.

Godspeed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Donnelly".

Tim Donnelly  
Assemblymember, 59<sup>th</sup> District