Governor's Mansion Fire: The Loss of a Texas Treasure

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Good morning.

I have seen many things in my time as governor, but few sights have left a deeper impression on me than the charred remains of this genuine Texas treasure standing behind me. As I consider what was done to this once-majestic home, my heart aches beyond words. As a Texan, I am angry that a part of my state’s heritage has been attacked. As a Governor, I am saddened that a place that my family has called home has been so badly damaged. I cannot begin to understand what would motivate someone to do this, but I do know that they will be caught, and they will be prosecuted for what they have done.

This beautiful structure has stood for more than 150 years as a symbol of our state’s commitment to representative government, a home where great Texans like Sam Houston, Lawrence Sullivan Ross, and Bill Clements once lived. And as the current Governor of this great state, I am committed to making sure that this tragedy will be but a small mark on the timeline of our state’s remarkable history. We will restore. We will renew. And we will rebuild this magnificent structure so that future generations may gaze upon its beauty and appreciate its history.

Texans have always rallied to a challenge. Be it a hurricane like Katrina and Rita, or a space shuttle falling from the sky, Texas does not shrink from a tragedy. And we will meet this challenge as well. For more than 150 years, this mansion has been a symbol of power and prestige for the greatest state in the union, and it will be again. For more than 150 years, this has been a home where children have slid down the banister, chased their pets, and
grown to adulthood. A place where families have celebrated holidays and welcomed friends, and it will be again. For more than 150 years, this building has been the one constant as 40 different governors have passed through its doors, and it will be again. For more than 150 years, the Texas Governors Mansion has been the home of good people, with grand ideas for a great state, AND IT WILL BE AGAIN.

I will take a few questions.