Blue Alert Announcement
*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.

Monday, August 18, 2008

Thank you, Chief [Acevedo, APD], for hosting us here today and congratulations on your successes here in Austin.

I was just in California last week and I think we can agree that you made a great choice in moving to Texas.

Thank you, also to Allan Polunsky for being here today and for your efforts to make Texas a safer place to live.

I want to say a special word of thanks to all of our law enforcement personnel who are here today.

We live in a fallen world, so there will always be a percentage of the human population with no regard for any life but their own.

On behalf of the law-abiding people of Texas, we thank you for standing between us and them, because that area between us and them can be a dangerous place.

Already this year, more than 60 police officers across the country have been killed in the line of duty.

Here in Texas, we have lost seven brave officers this year in incidents involving drunk drivers, gunfire and the like.

If you ask me, that is seven too many. That statistic represents seven communities where a defender was struck down, seven reminders of the perils of law enforcement, seven families whose worst fears became a reality.

Earlier this year, Michaela Burns, mother of little Micah and a resident of Linden, Texas,
received the news that every law enforcement family dreads.

Her husband, Trooper James Scott Burns, had been killed in the course of a routine traffic stop, and the assailant had disappeared.

The situation ended two days later when the shooter took his own life, but, for some, there is a lack of closure because this criminal never faced a judge or jury.

It tells you something about this strong woman that, since her husband’s funeral, Michaela has handwritten more than 2,000 thank you notes for everyone who expressed their condolences to her.

She is in Linden today, working to support her daughter, soldiering on as so many do after a loss like this.

To her and to all other law enforcement families who have lost a loved one, thank you for your courage in the face of unspeakable tragedy.

Know that the people of our state continue to pray for you and honor the memory of the fallen.

It is not easy loving someone who is guided by a higher calling, to live with someone who would willingly stand at the point of collision between good and evil.

But the same integrity that led them to serve and protect is the same integrity that made them such a great friend, a loving spouse and a caring parent.

That integrity is the core essence of law enforcement and of those who heed its call.

Today, we are gathered to restate our gratitude for members of the law enforcement community, to reiterate our support for you and your families, and to take a simple step that will rally the entire state to your side.

Today, I am issuing an executive order creating a Blue Alert program for the state of Texas.

You are, no doubt, familiar with the Amber Alert that speeds the apprehension of child abductors, and the Silver Alert which helps us find senior citizens who are missing and may be in danger.

Using the same notification system of TxDOT signs and media announcements, we will issue a Blue Alert to apprehend individuals who have fled after assaulting or killing a Texas police officer.

This will give citizens the opportunity to contribute to law and order by simply remaining vigilant.

When the make, model and license plate number of an assailant’s vehicle is disseminated, Texans can and should do only two things: keep their eyes open, then make a simple phone call if they spot the vehicle.

This simple act will speed the apprehension of a person who could harm others or even escape prosecution for their crime.

Working together, Texans can show their support for the brave men and women who protect them and ensure that those who do them harm are quickly captured, fully prosecuted and appropriately punished.
Thank you all for being here. May God bless you and may He continue to bless the great state of Texas.

I would now like to introduce to you Allan Polunsky, Chairman of the Public Safety Commission. Allan?

It is for people like Michaela and Micah Burns, for the men and women who serve and protect us, and the families who love them, that I issue this executive order.