HAVING KIDS™
Planning a fair start

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Governor Edmund G. Brown
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Governor Brown,

Having Kids is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to reforming family planning by replacing parent-centered family planning models with the human rights-based and child-first Fair Start model.

You are well aware of the case of David and Louise Turpin of Perris and the thirteen homeschooled children they tortured and neglected over an untold span of years. As you also know, the state was ultimately responsible for preventing this horror and for protecting its most vulnerable citizens. We write to ask that you and the Bureau of Children's Justice launch an investigation into the Turpins and the actions and inactions of the legally responsible agencies in Riverside County that allowed this to happen.

Reacting to crimes after the fact is insufficient on its own, however. The state is obligated to prevent these crimes.What happened in the case of the Turpins stems from a larger problem of poor family planning and parenting; a problem that begins with a paradigm in which the decision to have kids is focused on what parents want in the short term rather than what each child needs in the long term.

That paradigm is pushed along by a subtle pronatalism that runs from the tax credits families like the Turpins receive for children to a state-supported culture of familial privacy that says having and raising kids is the exclusive business of the parents. That model ignores every child's right to a minimum standard of wellbeing at birth, exacerbates economic and other inequalities, and is destroying our and our children's environment and climate.

The Turpins represent this paradigm perfectly; a massive group of home-schooled children, born and tortured in the privacy of the Turpins family realm with no protection from the state. The parent-centered family planning and parenting paradigm is a violation of human rights – the overriding human rights of children to be protected.

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Although it's too late for the Turpin's children, the State of California can fulfill its obligations and prevent situations like this by moving towards a human-rights based and child-first family planning model. In the context of child abuse and neglect, the best way to do that is for your administration to work with legislators to pass legislation that authorizes courts, in specialized cases, to issue orders preventing abusive and neglectful parents from having additional children. (See: https://havingkids.org/theproblem/ & https://havingkids.org/solution-fair-start-orders/) Such orders were envisioned and virtually called for in the case of *People v. Zaring*, 8 Cal. App. 4th 362, 374, 10 Cal. Rptr. 2d 263, 271 (1992) and could be authorized with a simple amendment to Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 362(d).

Will such a law help the Turpin children? No. But it will begin a change in paradigms where we take family planning and parenting seriously and regard it more publicly, so as to prevent more victims like the Turpin children. It will reflect the simple and irrefutable principle that parents known to abuse and neglect children should not have more. If California takes its responsibility to protect children seriously, it will learn from the disaster of the Turpins.

Sincerely,

Anne Green