



## DONNA HOWARD

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 48

July 15, 2013

Mr. Steven C. McCraw, Director  
Texas Department of Public Safety  
P.O. Box 4087  
Austin, TX 78773-0001

Dear Director McCraw:

As Vice Chair of the House Administration Committee, I would like to compliment DPS on its work over the past few weeks. This summer's Special Sessions have brought an unprecedented increase in citizen participation at the Texas State Capitol, and DPS officers handled the situation with professionalism and respect. In light of the enormous and passionate crowds, I am grateful that we were able to conduct the business of the state with few arrests and no major incidents.

I would like to express my concern, however, over allegations revolving around the inspections of citizens at the Capitol on Friday, July 12th. As you know, there were reports that DPS officers had discovered a number of unseemly items, including one jar suspected to contain urine and 18 jars suspected to contain feces. These reports were seemingly confirmed by a DPS Press Release that my office received that afternoon. But after news of the jars was announced, repeated inquiries by both the press and my office resulted in little to no information confirming the validity of the allegations. To bring greater clarity to the situation, I ask that your office provide answers to the following questions:


- Is it still the Agency's contention that visitors to the Capitol attempted to bring urine and feces into the Senate gallery during the July 12th debate on House Bill 2?
- If so, is this documented in an official Department report, and by which officer or officers?
- It is my understanding that any suspicious jars were required to be discarded, rather than confiscated. Is that correct, or were there jars that were confiscated? If so, what has happened to them?
- Why were suspicious jars not confiscated, when that seems to have been the protocol for handling other items such as feminine hygiene products and nutrition bars?
- Were the names of visitors with suspicious jars documented?

- Are there instances on this date where visitors with suspicious jars were allowed to enter the Senate gallery after having disposed of the contents?
- If the allegations of suspicious jars are accurate, at what checkpoint(s) were they discovered: at one or more of the entrances to the Capitol, or at the entrance to the Senate gallery?
- If the July 12th allegations were not accurate, and due to a simple miscommunication brought about by the hectic nature of the day, is it the Department's intent to issue a correction?

With limited exception, protesters at the Capitol over the past month have behaved in an orderly and peaceful manner. I am troubled that inaccurately distributed information may unfairly and unfavorably portray the thousands of citizens who legitimately and lawfully exercised their right of democratic participation — particularly since no evidence has been shown to substantiate the allegations related to these "suspicious jars." I respectfully ask that you help to set the record straight.

Thank you for your consideration of my letter, and your assistance with this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 512-463-0631 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Donna Howard

cc: The Honorable Kevin Eltife, Chair, Senate Administration Committee  
The Honorable Charlie Geren, Chair, House Administration Committee