



Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on August 23, 2014

Democrats Try to Derail Rick Perry

Even those of us who are used to seeing politics get pretty tough and dirty are startled by Governor Rick Perry's August 15 indictment by a grand jury on two counts of abusing his office. If convicted, he could face more than 100 years in jail.

Now, that's hardball politics.

The case revolves around Perry's efforts to get Rosemary Lehmborg, the district attorney in Travis County, to resign her office after her arrest on drunken driving charges. A video taken at the police station at the time showed her kicking the door of her cell and yelling at police officers, who had to put her in restraints. A blood test confirmed that her blood-alcohol level was nearly three times the legal limit for driving.



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Lehmborg pleaded guilty to the charges and received a 45-day jail sentence. After her conviction, Perry said that "the people of Texas" had lost confidence in her and demanded that she resign as district attorney.

Perry argued that a prosecutor who breaks the law and abuses law-enforcement personnel is in no position to judge the "public integrity" of others in government. Unless she agreed to step down, Perry said he would veto a \$7.5 million appropriation that the Texas Legislature had voted for the Public Integrity Unit of the Travis County District Attorney's Office. I'll pause for a moment while you consider the irony of the dispute being over funding for a "Public Integrity Unit," when the person in charge of the money had been jailed for drunken driving.

Ah, but this was in Travis County, the most liberal county in Texas. Democrats pretty much rule the roost in the area, which includes Austin, the state capital. When Lehmborg refused to resign her post, Perry followed up on his threat and vetoed the appropriation. When the Legislature refused to override him, the funding was dead.

Now, here's where it gets a little tricky. No one disputes that, as governor of Texas, Perry had every right to veto the funds. But Michael McCrum, the special prosecutor pursuing the case against the governor, charged that *threatening to do so* was an illegal effort to intimidate Lehmborg.

The indictment said that Perry "intentionally or knowingly misused government property" and brought two charges against the governor: abuse of official capacity, which is a first-degree felony and carries a penalty of five to 99 years in prison, and coercion of a public official, a third-degree felony with a two-to-10-year jail term.

Charging that Perry "misused government property" by getting the state not to spend money certainly seems like a stretch. And what about the governor's right to free speech? Doesn't the Constitution have



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something to say about that?

No matter. Leading Democrats in Texas were quick to celebrate the news. Gilberto Hinojosa, the chairman of the Texas Democratic Party, issued a statement saying, "Gov. Rick Perry has brought dishonor to his office, his family and the State of Texas." U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-Texas) said, "For the sake of Texas, Governor Perry should resign following his indictment on two criminal felony counts involving abuse of office."

Perry, of course, denies that he did anything wrong. "I stood up for the rule of law in the State of Texas," he declared, and vowed that he wouldn't change a thing if he had it to do all over again.

It's too soon to tell what effect all of this will have on a possible run for the presidency by Perry in 2016. While it will probably galvanize his present supporters, the controversy could become an expensive and time-consuming distraction as he tries to expand his base.

No doubt, that is exactly what some powerful Democrats intended.

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

***Chip Wood** was the first news editor of The Review of the News and also wrote for American Opinion, our two predecessor publications. He is now the geopolitical editor of Personal Liberty Digest, where his column appears regularly. This article first appeared in [PersonalLiberty.com](#) and has been reprinted with permission.*



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