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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: February 26, 2010
Re: Jason Matthew Perez
9 Years Prison for Child Abuse

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Jason Matthew Perez, age 29, of Modesto, was convicted of child abuse, inflicting great bodily injury, and driving under the influence in a separate case. Deputy District Attorney Elaine Casillas prosecuted the case for the People.

On April 10, 2006, Perez and his wife were babysitting the 10-week-old victim for their neighbor in the city of Modesto. Perez admitted to law enforcement that he threw the infant in the air several times because "she made funny faces when she cried." At one point, when he threw her in the air, she hit the ceiling and then fell to the floor hitting her head. Perez then burned the victim's foot in a scheme to cover up his actions. He urged the victim's mother to take the infant to the hospital telling her that he accidentally burned the victim's foot on a coffee pot while holding her and then accidentally dropped her to the floor when she cried in pain. The victim received severe injuries as a result of the head injury which included being blinded in one eye and needing a brace on her leg to help her walk.

At sentencing today, Deputy District Attorney Elaine G. Casillas read a statement sent to her by the victim's adopted parents. They described the struggles the victim has had to deal with in physical therapy and also in daily simple tasks that other children do naturally. They end the letter writing, "because of Bella's loving, joyous spirit, she would forgive Jason Perez for what he did to her and so do we as her parents."

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Thomas Zeff sentenced Perez to 9 years in state prison to be served consecutively to a 12-year sentence from the state of Nevada.

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