

Bloody Protest Against Brown

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Sacramento

A handful of welfare rights activists left Governor Brown symbolic bottles of blood and ashes for Christmas presents yesterday in a gory media event staged to complain that the governor has abandoned California's poor.

The San Jose group, calling itself the Welfare Recipients League, accused Brown of pinch-penny welfare policies that resulted in the deaths of two children during his administration.

Kevin Aslanian, leader of the demonstration, said six-month-old Cammile Norman died in Riverside in March, 1977, when her mother was denied emergency welfare assistance. He charged that the Norman family was forced to sleep in the streets, where the infant caught a cold that turned into pneumonia and led to her death.

The incident is the subject of a lawsuit Aslanian's organization filed against the state more than a year ago. The suit charges that county welfare agencies systematically ignored requirements to provide needy families with emergency assistance, and that state government knew about it and did nothing to intervene.

The state Department of Social Services has denied the charges and is fighting the suit in Sacramento court.

Details of the alleged second death were scant. Aslanian said that a two-year-old died in Alameda county about two years ago "under similar circumstances." But he could supply no name or additional facts.

To draw attention to their accusations, the eight or so adults and children participating in the demonstration staged a news conference in Brown's reception room.

They left behind as Christmas

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presents a bottle of liquid to represent "the blood that he has bled from the poor children" and a bottle of ashes "consisting of all our hopes that he has destroyed."

Aslanian, a vocal welfare crusader, acknowledged to reporters that he has received welfare for "six or seven years" under a program for unemployed parents.

But while he has been receiving his assistance, he said, 85 percent of the families who need emergency welfare help do not receive it because of a state policy not to spend \$22 million that it would cost. The figures, Aslanian said, came from a state memo.

But in the Social Services department, a spokesman said he could find no such memo. He added that the state estimates it will spend \$22 million this fiscal year providing the "immediate needs" grants of \$100 each to the most critically destitute families.