



Written by [Sam Blumenfeld](#) on August 17, 2011

## Rick Perry: The New Bulldozer on the Block

Rick Perry's self-propelled entry into the contest for the Republican presidential nomination is creating a bit of a stir among conservatives. He missed the debates and straw polls in Iowa and yet immediately emerged as one of the front runners before even facing a Tea Party audience. The fact that Michele Bachmann won the straw poll (barely squeaking by runner-up Ron Paul) and that Pawlenty pulled out of the race, means that there is plenty of time for all sorts of things to happen in the months ahead.



According to the latest poll, Perry has come out ahead of Romney and Bachmann and Paul. But it is unlikely that Mitt Romney will play dead and not do some research into Perry's record and find a way to demolish this new threat to his candidacy. Romney's strategy is to get as many delegates at the Republican convention as possible to vote for him. After all, it's the delegates who will pick the next President of the United States.

But already, conservative Republicans in Texas are sending out email messages warning us about Rick Perry. A group called the Republican Liberty Caucus of Texas states in their message: "Governor Perry's record of big government, big spending, big taxing and attacks on the fundamental rights of Texas citizens is familiar to Texans, but seems to be much less well known to Republicans outside the state."

They report that Perry created business slush funds to bring businesses to Texas. "Many of these businesses eventually downsized or relocated long before they had earned the money Perry gave them, or even went bankrupt with \$25 million fund dollars like Countrywide Financial."

Perry is also a big promoter of toll roads. "His toll road projects have confiscated family farms and torn communities apart," said the Republican Liberty Caucus. "Toll roads have been used as a massive off-the-books tax program, taking money from Texas drivers and feeding it to foreign financial interests and management." And Republican Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison even charged that Perry was attempting "to line the pockets of corporate tollroad operators."

Perry also promoted the idea of a special business tax called the "Franchise Tax" which taxes businesses at different arbitrary rates set by the government. The Caucus states: "For example it taxes small car repair shops at double the rate it taxes large dealerships for car repairs. It's a small-business and job killer."

The Caucus claims that Perry was responsible for scuttling the Anti-TSA bill introduced by Rep. David Simpson in the state legislature. The bill would have held the TSA accountable for intrusive searches of airline passengers. Perry delayed submitting the bill at a special legislative session until it was too late to get it passed. The Caucus considered this to be deliberate sabotage.

But perhaps the most egregious violation of privacy rights committed by the Texas Governor was his shocking issuance of an executive order which would have forcibly vaccinated every girl in Texas



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entering sixth grade with Merck's Gardasil vaccine for Human Papilloma Virus. Forced vaccination programs are not needed in a free society where sensible behavior by teenagers can prevent such diseases from occurring. This particular drug had not even been approved long enough so that its side effects were known.

Indeed, this whole affair smacked of big-government cronyism. Perry's former chief of staff Mike Toomey is a top Merck lobbyist, and Toomey's mother-in-law headed a Merck-funded front group pushing vaccination mandates. In addition, Merck's political action committee donated \$6,000 to Perry's re-election campaign in 2007.

Libertarians and social conservatives, including the Texas Eagle Forum, were so incensed by Perry's imperious edict — in total disregard for parental rights and individual liberty — that they got the Republican-dominated legislature to pass bills overturning the Governor's imposed health order.

These Texas conservatives are also reminding us that Perry supported TARP and was Al Gore's Texas campaign manager back in 1980. Of course, that's over 30 years ago when Perry was just a political toddler. He can be excused for being a Democrat way back when.

But he seems to be little more than an ambitious political opportunist who knows that in 2012 most voters will pull the lever for ABO — anyone but Obama. In other words, anyone who is nominated by the Republican Party will undoubtedly be the next president.

What is also somewhat unseemly is how the rambunctious Texan tried to upstage Michele Bachmann by turning up at the Lincoln celebration dinner at Waterloo, Iowa, Bachmann's birthplace, where she was meant to be the star. She had just won the Iowa straw poll, and Perry did not take part in the Iowa debate or straw poll but got a lot of media attention in Waterloo. He had announced his intention to enter the race just the day before in South Carolina.

Meanwhile, the events in Iowa made it possible for Bachmann to show her skills as a candidate. She was able to parry off all of the questions meant to trap her. She is very much aware of the liberal media minefield she will be walking through in the months ahead. Even Chris Wallace asked the kind of questions that liberals love to ask. But so far, she has given them nothing to feed on.

Ron Paul's popularity is a clear indication that Republicans are becoming far more libertarian than Eisenhower-style "Republican." The Texan congressman greatly appeals to young voters. His showing in the straw poll surprised many political pundits. But his message is resonating throughout the nation.

So far, President Obama's attempts to explain away the failures of his administration are not convincing anyone with half a brain. Meanwhile, the coming year will be a golden opportunity for conservative and libertarian Republicans to saturate the media with the message of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."



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