



GOP Presidential Candidate Rick Perry

Beginning his political career as a Democrat, Perry was elected a State Representative in 1984, garnering favor with some liberal Texas lawmakers, and serving as Al Gore's Texas campaign chair in 1988. Becoming a Republican in 1989, he served as Texas Agriculture Commissioner until elected Lieutenant Governor in 1998; he then moved into the Governor's mansion in 2000 when George W. Bush resigned to become President. Many conservative Texans, however, know that although Perry has consistently positioned himself as a conservative, his public record reveals considerable inconsistencies. For instance, in the 2008 election, he first endorsed pro-abortion and pro-homosexual "marriage" Rudy Giuliani for President, before endorsing John McCain when Giuliani withdrew — though in terms of substance McCain's positions on key issues varied little from those of Barack Obama.



Perry has also styled himself a constitutionalist. He described his 2010 book *Fed Up* as "mostly an argument for states' 10th Amendment rights" — and at the June Republican Leadership Conference urged a return to government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." Yet he's been a solid supporter of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a so-called "free-trade" arrangement modeled after the old European Common Market, launching pad for the economic — and eventually political — merger now known as the European Union. In a 2002 speech, Perry declared:

I was the first statewide official in Texas to stand up for NAFTA in the early 1990s. It was not always a popular position. More recently, President Bush stood up to those who would blame Mexico and immigration for America's woes. George W. Bush ... and those of us here today stood up against those who would ignore NAFTA, close our borders, stop cross-border trucking and slam the door on free and fair trade between our great nations. We know that the United States and Mexico share more than a common border, we share a common future, un destino comun.

Critics have warned that the NAFTA supranational scheme is intended to take a trajectory similar to that of the Common Market-EU, gradually transferring U.S. trade (and eventually economic and political) policies to what would become, if not in name at least in substance, a North American Union. Such multinational arrangements may be called "free-trade," but in reality they have little to do with genuine free trade (absence of government interference) — they only promote the rise of the supranational regulatory bodies the agreements entail.

Strengthening trade under NAFTA provides the context for the proposed Trans-Texas Corridor (TTC) —



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a supranational highway to run from Mexico to Canada — championed by Governor Perry. The proposal has been wildly unpopular with Texans, who have fought it since Perry introduced it a decade ago. Although the battle is currently off the public radar, the war isn't over. After the Texas Department of Transportation declared the TTC "dead" in 2009, *The New American* noted Perry's response: "The key is that we have to go forward and build the infrastructure."

The Governor favors Public Private Partnership (PPP) financial agreements, in which taxpayers assume liability for public projects while private investors reap the profits. He has relentlessly promoted the TTC, overseeing the secret deal in which a foreign company (Cintra, of Spain) promised to develop taxpayer-funded roads in Texas in return for toll revenue profits. Perry was strongly criticized for not making public the terms of the contract with Cintra.

One highly unpopular feature of the TTC was the unprecedented use of eminent domain for seizing hundreds of thousands of acres of private property for the corridor construction. But when Texans balked at the project, the Governor and the legislature pushed back. It seems Perry's "commitment" to private enterprise did not include defending the property rights of landowners who got in the way of his TTC. Republican Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison commented in October 2009: "Texans can't trust Rick Perry when it comes to protecting their land from the government, ceasing to lease our highways to foreign companies or ending the Trans-Texas Corridor."

Eminent domain was being used to transfer private property in the corridor's path — not to the state, but to the private entity Cintra. In 2007, a significant property rights bill passed by the legislature, HB 2006, would have ended the practice, protected landowners, and severely curtailed profit transfers to the Spanish company. As the legislative session neared adjournment, this important bill stood ready for Perry's signature after having passed overwhelmingly in both houses of the state legislature. But it languished unsigned on his desk as he jetted to the 2007 Bilderberg meeting in Istanbul, an invitation-only conference for affluent and politically powerful one-world internationalists. He returned from the meeting to veto the bill with no time left for a legislative override.

Perry is also campaigning against ObamaCare and its accompanying stringent mandates. However, he attempted to have the state of Texas intrude into the private lives of Texans in 2007 by issuing an executive order requiring every girl in Texas entering sixth grade to get vaccinated against a sexually transmitted virus (human papillomavirus, or HPV) that causes cervical cancer. His order required that the vaccine be administered free of charge in cases where there was no insurance coverage.

Facing vehement protests from Texans, the legislature eventually overrode the decision. Two years later, Perry declared in an April 2009 press release, "I believe that our federal government has become oppressive in its size, its intrusion into the lives of our citizens, and its interference with the affairs of our state"; however, many Texas parents doubt that he thinks that concept applies to their ability to run their own families free of Texas overreach.

Also, Perry's stance on illegal immigration is somewhat double-minded. Although he's "disappointed" the recent legislative session didn't pass a law abolishing sanctuary cities (U.S. cities which protect illegal immigrants), at the same time he is against legislation permitting law-enforcement officers to check the citizenship of those they stop for violations.

Additionally, according to the July 28 *Boston Herald*:

One crack in [Perry's] conservative credentials could pose a serious problem — signing a bill giving in-state tuition to illegal immigrants. Perry defended his 2001 decision to a New Hampshire



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reporter last week, saying he didn't want to punish young people for their parents' actions. But for ... social conservatives crucial to any Perry bid for the White House, his support of Texas' "DREAM Act" for undocumented students could be a tough sell.

As Perry hits the campaign trail, it is clear that jobs and the Texas economy will be his calling card. "But," the *Austin American-Statesman* recently asked, "How much credit can he take for the state's economy?"

The paper noted that almost half of the state's job growth in the last two years was in the education, healthcare, and government sectors that "will now take a hit as federal stimulus money [the \$6.4 billion Perry received for the state] runs out and the legislature's eight-percent cut in state spending translates into thousands of layoffs among state workers and teachers in the coming weeks."

The *Statesman* continued, "[James] Galbraith [a professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs] said other economic factors, not Perry, are driving the Texas economy." Those factors include geology and the price of oil. Galbraith also told the *Statesman* that Texas has always had a "reputation as a low-tax, low-service state" and that Perry "did not inherit a high-tax, high-service state and transform it."

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