



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 5, 2011

## Perry To Granite Staters: No Border Fence

Texas Gov. Rick Perry (left), the leading contender for the GOP presidential nomination, according to a Gallup poll taken from August 17-21, has reiterated his opposition to a fence along the American border with Mexico. He commented on the fence at a campaign stop in New Hampshire, a crucial primary state.



Perry, [who served](#) as the chairman of leftist Al Gore's Democratic presidential campaign in Texas in 1988, has a confirmed liberal history on immigration, as [The New American has reported](#), although he now campaigns as a conservative.

In New Hampshire, Perry repeated the idea that building a fence would merely boost the ladder business.

### Perrys Remarks

The former Gore booster was speaking to potential supporters at a private reception, The Associated Press reported, when someone asked about his support for a border fence.

No, I don't support a fence on the border, he told the Granite Staters, stating:

The fact is, it's 1,200 miles from Brownsville to El Paso. Two things: How long you think it would take to build that? And then if you build a 30-foot wall from El Paso to Brownsville, the 35-foot ladder business gets real good.

Instead, AP reported, Perry brought up a new fence idea:

Perry said he supported "strategic fencing" and National Guard troops to prevent illegal immigration and violence from Mexican drug cartels.

The answer produced an angry shout from at least one audience member. And it exposed an ongoing rift with some conservative voters over Perry's immigration record.

Perry did not say why strategic fencing would not inspire a strategic ladder business but in any event, Perry's weakness on immigration and defending our borders is nothing new.

Perry's remarks in New Hampshire reprise a similar comment he made in Mexico City in 2007. We know how to deal with border security, and you don't do it by building a fence, Perry said, the AP reported.

You do it by putting boots on the ground; you do it by using the technology that's available ... and coordinating very highly with local, state and federal officials.

But the idea that you're going to build a 1,200-mile wall ... is idiocy. It absolutely would not work. If you build a 40-foot wall, then the 42-foot ladder industry takes off.

And with those remarks, Perry [merely reprised](#) leftist Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, who said the same thing when she was governor of New Mexico. You show me a 50-foot wall



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and I'll show you a 51-foot ladder at the border. That's the way the border works.

[Napolitano ended](#) U.S. efforts to construct a virtual fence in January.

## **In-State Tuition**

Perry's commitment to immigration ideas that fail to defend U.S. sovereignty and border security is solid. In 2001, the former [Gore operative signed](#) a state version of the [DREAM Act](#), permitting illegal aliens to receive in-state tuition breaks in college.

As [The New American reported](#), Perry explained his position at a border summit:

We must say to every Texas child learning in a Texas classroom, "We don't care where you come from, but where you are going, and we are going to do everything we can to help you get there." And that vision must include the children of undocumented workers. That's why Texas took the national lead in allowing such deserving young minds to attend a Texas college at a resident rate. Those young minds are a part of a new generation of leaders[;] the doors of higher education must be open to them. The message is simple: educacion es el futuro, y si se puede [education is the future, and yes, we can].

Although Perry supported a bill in Texas to outlaw cities from becoming sanctuaries for illegal aliens, the bill died in committee. But [Texas Monthly.com reported](#) that Perry supported policies that in effect granted sanctuary.

He opposed Arizona's [tough anti-illegal immigration bill](#), [the website reported](#), which requires police to determine the immigration status a person with whom they come into lawful contact if police reasonably suspect the person is in the country illegally.

SB 1070, [said Perry](#), would not be the right direction for Texas because some aspects of the law turn law enforcement officers into immigration officials by requiring them to determine immigration status during any lawful contact with a suspected alien, taking them away from their existing law enforcement duties, which are critical to keeping citizens safe.

## **Website Silent**

Apparently, Perry knows his leftist position on immigration is troubling and may harm his candidacy.

The issues page of his [campaign website ducks the issue](#) entirely.

Conservatives are not happy about Perry's position on the issue. [Fox News Latino quotes](#) three activists who say Perry is a weak sister on illegal immigration. [William Gheen](#), of [Americans for Legal Immigration](#), told the network that Gov. Perry is very eager to appear tough on illegal immigration, but upon closer inspection he's part of the problem.

The network also quoted Texas tea party activist Suzanne Guggenheim, a member of the [Tea Party Patriots National Leadership Council](#). We have not seen much at all on immigration, nothing at all," [she told](#) Fox Latino, which reported:

There is some disappointment with his leadership on the issue. ...

If Perry becomes president, Texas undocumented immigration opponents say, conservative voters shouldn't expect tough leadership on the issue.

JoAnn Fleming, chairwoman of the Tea Party Caucus advisory committee to the Texas Legislature, said, We have a little bit of trouble imagining that our governor could do that on the national level.



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VDare.com flatly states that Perry is pro-amnesty, while the [Dont Treat On Me](#) tea party coalition in New Hampshire, earlier this summer, urged members to contact Perry in Texas and push for comprehensive immigration controls.

Despite his weakness on the issue, Perry leads the GOP pack running for president.

The [Gallup polling organization reported](#) on Aug. 24 that Perry has emerged as rank-and-file Republicans current favorite for their party's 2012 presidential nomination. Twenty-nine percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents nationwide say they are most likely to support Perry, with Mitt Romney next, at 17%.

Texas Rep. Ron Paul came in third in the poll, with 13 percent support.

Interestingly, Rep. Paul, whom many would consider a hardliner when it comes to defending U.S. sovereignty, also has reservations about a border fence. When [John Stossel of Real Clear Politics](#), asked Paul during an interview about his position on a border fence, the exchange went as follows:

*Stossel: You want a 700-mile fence between our border and Mexico?*

Ron Paul: Not really. There was an immigration bill that had a fence (requirement) in it, but it was to attack amnesty. I don't like amnesty. So I voted for that bill, but I didn't like the fence. I don't think the fence can solve a problem. I find it rather offensive.

*Stossel: What should we do?*

Paul: Get rid of the subsidies. (If) you subsidize illegal immigration, you get more of it.



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