



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 9, 2011

Texas Governor Perry About to Enter GOP Race

Perry will speak at the RedState Gathering, a national conference of conservative bloggers, in Charleston, South Carolina, before flying on up the coast to appear at a house party on his behalf in Greenland, New Hampshire. He is expected to make clear his intention to run for President, though a formal announcement of his candidacy will take place in Texas, probably some time next week, sources told [Politico](#).



Perry's name is not on the ballot at the Ames event, but a political action group called Americans for Perry has been promoting write-in votes for the Texas Governor. He has been the subject of increasing speculation about the GOP campaign in recent weeks, especially among Republicans unimpressed with the current field of candidates.

"There is still a thirst for another voice to come in," Craig Schoenfeld, an Iowa Republican leading the Americans for Perry effort, told the [New York Times](#). "They are looking for the kind of leadership he has shown in Texas, while the country has gone the other direction."

Whoever wins the straw poll in Iowa will have to compete with Perry for media attention, as he follows his South Carolina and New Hampshire visits with a trip to Iowa a few days later. As the Governor of a large state that has enjoyed robust job growth while the rest of the country suffers more than nine percent unemployment, Perry is expected to be a formidable candidate for the Republican nomination. His pro-business record, his opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage, as well as his outspoken zeal as an evangelical Christian makes him popular with many of the social and cultural conservatives among party activists. He has also drawn sharp criticism from some quarters for lending the weight and prestige of his political office to religious events, especially the prayer rally he organized in Houston that drew 30,000 people to Reliant Stadium on Saturday.

The longest-serving Governor in Texas history, Perry was Lieutenant Governor under George W. Bush and became Governor when Bush resigned the office following his election as President in 2000. He won election on his own in 2002 and was reelected in 2006 and 2010. Perry was talked about as a possible presidential candidate for the 2008 election, but said he had no interest in running. Instead, he endorsed the presidential campaign of Rudy Giuliani, despite the former New York Mayor's support for legalized abortion and "gay rights." When Giuliani dropped out of the race early in 2008, both he and Perry endorsed John McCain, the eventual primary winner, though McCain's positions on key issues varied little from those of Barack Obama.

He is also suspect in the minds of many conservatives because he backed the Trans Texas Corridor (the necessary foundation for the NAFTA Superhighway), he attended the invitation-only Bilderberg meeting



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for internationalists in 2007, was an advocate for NAFTA, and promoted "[bi-national health insurance](#)" and healthcare with Mexico.

Throughout 2010 and the early part of this year, Perry disavowed any interest in running for President. But in an interview on Fox News in June, he said he was "certainly giving it the appropriate thought process." Asked what has changed his mind, Perry said his wife and his political supporters had asked him to "give this a second thought" because "our nation is in trouble."

But Perry has to this point taken a low-key approach toward a potential candidacy, foregoing the extensive out-of-state travel and speaking engagements most undeclared candidates undertake during the "exploratory" phase of their presidential campaigns. Instead, he hosted receptions in Austin for party activists who have made the political pilgrimage to the Texas capital to urge him to enter the race. Pamela Tucker, Deputy Speaker of the New Hampshire House of Representatives, was one of about 10 Granite Staters who made that trip on August 4. Tucker, who is hosting the house party for Perry at her Greenland home on Saturday, said the Governor's record on job growth in Texas is what led her to seek a Perry candidacy.

"He has created an environment in which the private sector has grown more jobs in Texas than in all the other 49 states combined, I believe," Tucker told *The New American*. "If he can transfer that onto the national level, I believe our country would be better off, considering we're facing over nine percent unemployment right now."

Perry, meanwhile, has quietly been recruiting campaign workers in key states and gaining fundraising commitments as he prepares to launch a full-fledged campaign. An [NBC/Wall Street Journal poll](#) taken in mid-July showed 11 percent of Republicans nationally making Perry their first choice for President, leaving the Governor trailing only Rep. Michele Bachmann and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. Back home, however, a survey of Austin "insiders" posted Monday by the online publication [Texas Tribune](#) found widespread skepticism about Perry's chances of winning the White House. While a heavy majority (77 percent) of the 89 participants believe he will win the South Carolina primary, only 20 percent see him winning the Republican caucuses in Iowa, the lead-off event in the nominating process, and 19 percent believe he will win in New Hampshire, where the first primary will be held. Thirty-eight percent think he can win the party's nomination, but only 17 percent believe he will be elected. The *Tribune* also published some of the comments of those taking part in the survey.

"HELL NO!" one answer came back on the question of whether Perry could win the election. "I think our country has had enough of Texans running the country."

"Obama will paint him as Goldwater — too radical and dangerous to lead," said another.

Another respondent was enthusiastic about Perry's chances to win the nomination:

No one else can speak to the Tea Party, religious/social conservatives, and Big Business constituencies quite like our Rick. He'll have the money he needs for the primary. Mitt believes in a different prophet, hails from Taxachusetts, and has some explaining to do on healthcare in the eyes of the Republican primary electorate. Yee-haw!

Photo of Rick Perry: AP Images



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