

## Remarks by Gov. Rick Perry

Iowa Freedom Summit, January 24, 2015, Des Moines, IA

Thank you. It is great to be back in the State of Iowa...the state that elected the first female combat veteran to the United States Senate...Joni Ernst!

I was proud to campaign on Joni's behalf...and on behalf of your governor...Terry Branstad. I also campaigned for a good man from the 1st congressional district in Iowa...we used to call him coach, now we call him Congressman...Rod Blum. I want to say a special thanks to another member of Congress...whose no holds barred, passionate conservatism brings us here today...Steve King.

Most of all, I want to thank the men and women here today who represent a grassroots movement to restore America to its central idea... and that is freedom.

Freedom is God's gift to mankind, and America's gift to the world. Freedom made us the most productive nation in the world at the turn of the 20th Century...and for freedom we sent our best and bravest to fight on foreign soil...lifting the yoke of tyranny off the backs of millions.

America is...and always will be...the last, great hope of the free world. And when freedom is imperiled at home...when it is threatened by big government, massive debt and slow growth...it is the people...who have the power to make great change.

And that's exactly what we did at the ballot box last November. Americans said enough to slow-growth tax policies...enough to smothering debt...enough to colossal bureaucracies unaccountable to the people...enough to broken borders that undermine our security.

The American people made a clean break from the economic policies that have slowed our recovery at home...and the foreign policies that have weakened our standing abroad.

And I have a feeling that, after six years of disappointment, mediocrity, and decline...a slow course correction is not what voters will be looking for in 2016.

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It might surprise you to know, I have been thinking a little about 2016. After six years of the most divisive president in our modern history, I believe Americans are looking for leaders who will bring the country back together...and heal the nation.

Americans are sick of the partisan bickering on both sides...of the grandstanding and gridlock...they want solutions, not soundbites...results, not rhetoric.

I am here to say to today that it is not good enough for conservatives to be an opposition force...we must offer a vision for the future. We have a tremendous opportunity to put forward a pro-growth agenda that returns jobs from overseas...increases wages...and allows middle class families to once again climb the ladder of success after a lost decade of economic decline. The time has come to usher in a new era of prosperity, reform and renewal.

We can begin by unleashing the American arsenal of energy for exploration and trade.

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Step one is for Congress to authorize the building of the Keystone Pipeline...and for the president to sign it into law. The whole Obama energy policy amounts to a long list of projects we cannot begin...permits we cannot grant...studies we cannot conclude...and resources we cannot use. It would be tragic if he continues to play to his political base instead of revving up our economic base.

We must open more of America to energy exploration to jump-start the economy and provide lower energy costs for families. And we must realize that energy is critical not only to our economy, but to national security.

To create jobs, we also need to reform the tax code. America has one of the highest corporate tax rates in the Western world. These policies ship hundreds of thousands of jobs overseas...and send capital fleeing to foreign nations. Our broken, outdated tax code has become an incubator of corruption, favoritism and bureaucratic harassment. It must be reformed.

We need to stop strangling small businesses with over-regulation. I want folks on Main Street...and not just the folks on Wall Street...to be able to make a living in this market.

Runaway agencies like the EPA harm business start-ups, and slow economic recovery. Small business can't access capital and invest in jobs. If we are to drive economic growth, small business must be the engine.

We also must be honest with the American people about the immoral debt that's being placed on the millennial generation. No great nation has ever taxed and spent its way to prosperity. Let's get our fiscal house in order.

It's time to make tough choices about spending...to stop putting off today's problems on tomorrow's Americans.

After six years of the Obama Presidency, we have a record number of Americans on food stamps. We have a so-called recovery weighted down by a massive bureaucracy, crippling regulations, archaic tax laws and record debt.

The only way to unleash growth is to make major economic and fiscal reforms. I know something about this. As governor of Texas I signed seven balanced budgets. I led a state with one of the lowest tax burdens...and we created the best economic climate in America.

We kept spending in check, provided smart regulations, improved education...and stopped frivolous lawsuits at the courthouse.

In the last 14 years, Texas has created nearly one-third of all new jobs in America. If you look at the last seven years...starting in December of 2007...you will see that 1.4 million jobs were created in Texas. In that same period, the rest of the country lost 400,000 jobs.

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America can experience a season of economic renewal if we expand energy production...reform the tax code...reduce regulations on small businesses...and control the size and scope of government, starting with spending.

But in 2014, the American People sent a message that goes beyond economic and fiscal reform.

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The institutions of our government are in crisis. For years our leadership has been lurching from one crisis to the next.

Take the crisis at the border. This summer the president was on an importance mission in Dallas, raising money for needy Democrats. So I invited him to chopper on down to the Rio Grande Valley to see the results of his policy that brought tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors to Texas. He turned me down, saying he doesn't do photo ops...which surprised his large roster of White House photographers.

It is hard to describe the events of last summer. Children turning themselves in to federal border patrol agents, where they were sent to makeshift federal facilities. Federal agents taken out of the field to change diapers and meet the basic needs of children without parents. Private ranch land, where we find dead bodies...victims of human trafficking.

To the human smugglers who exploit this human tragedy, these people are just a product to make a profit. But in our hearts, we know these are human beings made in the image of the same God.

It's a simple fact that the drug cartels control every square inch of land on the Mexican side of the border. And no one crosses without their consent.

It was because of this criminal threat that I took action last summer...and deployed the Texas National Guard to the border. The drug cartels and trans-national gangs exploit children, they enslave women, and they peddle drugs and weapons in our community. They are the face of evil.

For the sake of the nation, we did not stand idle against this threat. If Washington refuses to secure the border, Texas will.

This problem has dragged on long enough. While the president bears much of the responsibility for a change in policy that brought more than 70,000 unaccompanied minors to Texas, it is not all his fault. The fact is: Congress should have acted many years ago.

And that's the problem with Washington today. Congress has become a debating society, unable to act, only talk.

The institutions of government are failing as people are dying.

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We need to send a message to Congress: Secure the border now. Override the president's lawless executive order. Restore law and order to our border with Mexico. Stand up to the face of evil, and protect our citizens.

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It is also time for a major shift in our foreign policy. Time and again this Administration has chosen to abandon our friends and weaken our alliances.

Take Israel. When peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians fell apart...did we stand with our greatest ally in the Middle East?

No, unnamed Administration sources were quoted attacking the Israeli Prime Minister...and the Secretary of State compared Israel to the apartheid regime of South Africa.

That's not the America I know. The America I know stands for freedom...and stands steadfast with Israel.

Last year, we saw ISIS terrorists enter Iraq in American tanks, using American weapons, taking cities secured through the sacrifice of American blood. This happened because of the president's inaction in Syria, where he allowed opposition forces to become radicalized.

Separately, he warned the Syrian dictator that using chemical weapons on his people was a red line he must not cross. But Assad crossed that line without consequence...meaning a dictator remains in power due to this Administration's empty words.

When a president makes promises that he won't back up...his statements are not a policy, they're just an opinion. And the world takes note, realizing they can test both our strength and resolve.

These brutal terrorists do not respect talk...they only respect force.

What is at stake is the preservation of western values. And what is required is not moral confusion, but moral clarity.

It matters that we understand all of this, for one reason: Without confidence in the truth and goodness of our own values...the great moral inheritance of our own culture...how are we going to deal with the falsehood of theirs?

And what happened in Paris reminded us this is not a rhetorical question. Here is the simple fact: when it comes to the western world fighting this great threat...this Administration needs to stop leading from behind.

What is needed at this time in history is a clear vision for the world...with America leading again, and freedom on the march again.

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On the most pressing issues of our time...from jobs to energy security to national security...we don't have to settle for the present state of decline. We can usher in a new era of growth, strength and opportunity.

I am proud to be an American. Proud to be a citizen of a country that stands for freedom...and that defends freedom around the globe.

I am proud of our free enterprise system that allows people to risk their capital...to both succeed and fail...and always get up, dust themselves off and try again.

I am proud of American industry, and its innovating spirit.

I am proud to have worn the uniform of our nation...And proud of the young men and women who travel to far-flung regions of the world to fight for all that is right in the world.

There is nothing wrong in America today that can't be fixed with new leadership. The next two years are about hope and revival...and a vision to restore America's place in the world. America is looking for a new path forward. Starting today, let's give it to them.

Thank you, and God bless you.

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