

Rick Perry for President
Announcement Speech, August 13, 2011

Thank you. It is great to be at Red State, and even better to be governor of America's largest red state. It is also good to be back in the Palmetto State...South Carolina...where the people elect conservatives like Nikki Haley...and where they love the greatest fighting force on the face of the earth...the United States Military.

And speaking of them, may we have a brief moment of silence for those brave SEALs who gave all in the service of their country. Their sacrifice was immeasurable, their dedication profound, and we will not forget them.

I stand before you the governor of Texas. But I also stand before you the son of two tenant farmers...Ray Perry, who came home from 35 bombing missions during World War II to work his little corner of land...and Amelia Perry who made sure my sister Milla and I had everything we needed...including hand-sewing my clothes until the day I went off to college.

I am also the product of a place called Paint Creek...a community too small to be called a town along the rolling plains of West Texas. We grew dryland cotton and wheat...and when I wasn't farming or attending the Paint Creek Rural School...I could be found with Troop 48 working toward the rank of Eagle Scout.

At age 8, I was blessed to meet my future wife...Anita Thigpen...at a piano recital. We had our first date eight years later. And she finally agreed to marry me 16 years after that...(pause)...I'm persistent. There is no greater way to live life than with someone you love...and my first love is with us today, my wife Anita. We have also been blessed with two incredible children...Griffin and Sydney...they are also with us today, as is Griffin's wife Meredith.

What I learned growing up on the farm was a way of life centered on hard work, faith and thrift. Those values stick with me to this day. But it wasn't until I graduated from Texas A&M University...and joined the United States Air Force...flying C-130's to various parts of the globe...that I truly appreciated the blessings of freedom.

To paraphrase both Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan...I realized that the United States of America really is "the last best hope of mankind."

I saw systems of government that elevated rulers at the expense of ordinary people. Socialist systems cloaked in good intentions but delivering misery and stagnation. I learned that not everyone values life like we do in America...or the rights endowed to every human being by a loving God.

You see as Americans we're not defined by class...and we will never be told our place. What makes our nation exceptional is that anyone...of any background...can climb the highest of heights.

As Americans, we don't see the role of government as guaranteeing outcomes...but allowing free men and women to flourish based on their own vision, hard work and personal responsibility. And as Americans, we recognize there is no taxpayer money that wasn't first earned through the sweat and toil of our citizens.

That's why we reject this President's unbridled fixation on taking more money out of the wallets and pocketbooks of American families and employers and giving it to the central government.

"Spreading the wealth" punishes success while setting America on course to greater dependency on government.

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Washington's insatiable desire to spend our children's inheritance on failed "stimulus" plans and other misguided economic theories have given us record debt and left far too many unemployed.

Of course, now we are told we are in recovery. But this sure doesn't feel like a recovery to the more than nine percent of Americans who are unemployed...or the sixteen percent of African Americans and 11 percent of Hispanics in the same position...or the millions more who can only find part-time work...or those who have stopped even looking for a job.

One in six work-eligible Americans cannot find a full-time job. That is not a recovery...it is an economic disaster.

For those Americans who do have full-time jobs...they aren't experiencing economic recovery with rising fuel and food prices. Recovery is a meaningless word if the bank has foreclosed on your home...if you are under water on your mortgage...or locked into credit card debt. Those Americans know that this President and his big-spending, big-government policies have prolonged our national misery...not alleviated it.

And what are we to say to our children, upon whom we heap \$2 of debt for every \$5 we spend? Shall we say to them, "don't worry, Washington created 17 debt or entitlement commissions in 30 years because they didn't have the courage to make the tough decisions themselves?"

That Washington wouldn't even make modest entitlement program reforms...and the President refused to even offer a plan, for fear of the next election? How can the wealthiest nation in the history of civilization fail so miserably to pay its bills?

Mr. President, you can't win the future by selling it off to foreign creditors.

We can't afford four more years of rudderless leadership. Last week, that failed leadership...and the tax, spend and borrow agenda of this President...led to the first ever downgrade in the credit rating of the United States.

In reality, this is just the most recent downgrade. The fact is for nearly three years President Obama has been downgrading American jobs...downgrading our standing in the world...downgrading our financial stability...downgrading confidence...and downgrading the hope of a better future for our children.

His policies are not the only threat to this economy, so are his appointees. He has stacked the National Labor Relations Board with anti-business cronies who want to dictate to a private company, Boeing, where they can build a plant. No president should kill thousands of jobs in South Carolina, or any other state, simply because they choose to be a right-to-work state.

When the Obama Administration is not stifling economic growth through over-regulation, they are achieving the same through reckless spending. Debt is not only a threat to our economy, but to our security. America's standing in the world is in peril...not only because of disastrous economic policies...but from the incoherent muddle known as our foreign policy.

Our president has insulted our friends and encouraged our enemies...thumbing his nose at traditional allies such as Israel.

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He seeks to dictate new borders for the Middle East's oldest democracy – Israel...while he is an abject failure in his constitutional duty to protect our own borders.

His foreign policy seems to be based on alienating traditional allies...while basing our domestic agenda on importing failed Western European social values.

We don't need a president who apologizes for America...we need a president who protects and projects our values. We want allies and adversaries alike to know America seeks peace...but always from a position of strength. We will stand with those who stand with us, and we will vigorously defend our interests.

And those who threaten our interests...and harm our citizens...will not simply be scolded, they will be defeated.

Our nation cannot and must not endure four more years of aimless foreign policy. We cannot and must not endure four more years of rising unemployment...rising taxes...rising debt...and rising energy dependence on nations that intend us harm.

It is time to get America working again. To get our citizens working in good jobs again and our government working for the people again.

Page one of any economic plan to get America working must include a pink slip for our current president.

We must get back to the basic truths of economic success. As Governor, I've had to deal with the consequences of the national recession. In 2003, and again this year, my state faced billions of dollars in budget shortfalls. But we worked hard, made tough decisions and we balanced our budget. Not by raising taxes, but by setting priorities and cutting government spending. It can...and must...be done in Washington, DC.

In Texas I have led based on a few guiding principles. One, don't spend all the money. Two, keep taxes low and under control. Three, keep regulations fair and predictable. And four, reform the legal system so frivolous lawsuits don't paralyze employers that are trying to create jobs.

Over the years, we have followed this recipe to produce the strongest economy in the nation. Since June of 2009, Texas is responsible for more than 40 percent of the net new jobs created. *Texas is home to less than 10 percent of America's citizens...but forty percent of net new American jobs!*

I have cut taxes and delivered historic property tax reductions...and was the first Texas governor since World War II to cut general revenue spending. We passed lawsuit reforms that created jobs...including a "losers pay" law to help stop frivolous lawsuits.

Now, I talk a lot about Texas. I am a Texan and proud of it. But first, and foremost, I am a proud American. And any issue I have is not with my country, but its leaders.

We need a different approach because Washington isn't working. We need balanced budgets, lower taxes, less regulation and civil justice reform.

Our country's most urgent need is to revitalize our economy and stop the generational theft posed by record debt.

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I come to South Carolina today because I will not sit back and accept this path for America...because a great country requires a better direction...because a renewed nation requires a new president.

It is time to get America working again. That's why...with the support of my family...and an unwavering belief in the goodness of America...I declare to you today my candidacy for President of the United States.

It is time for Americans to believe again...to believe that the promise of our future is far greater than even the best days of our past. It is time to believe again in the potential of private enterprise, set free from the shackles of an overbearing federal government.

And it is time to truly restore our standing in the world...and renew our faith in freedom as the best hope for peace in a world beset with strife.

The change we seek will never emanate out of Washington...it will come from the windswept prairies of Middle America...the farms and factories across this great land...the hearts and minds of goodhearted Americans who will not accept a future that is less than our past...patriots who will not be consigned to a fate of less freedom in exchange for more government.

We do not have to accept our current circumstances. We will change them. *We're Americans.* That's what we do. We roll up our sleeves, get to work and make things better.

We reject the notion that Washington is our caretaker and we reject the state that...in Margaret Thatcher's words...takes *too much from* you in order to do *too much for* you.

We are dismayed at the injustice that nearly half of all Americans don't even pay federal income taxes...while liberals say those who do must pay even more.

We are indignant at leaders who don't listen...and spend money faster than they can print it.

In America, the people are not the subjects of government...government is subject to the people.

It is up to us...to this present generation of Americans...to take a stand for freedom...to send a message to Washington that we are taking our future back from the grips of central planners who would control our healthcare, spend our treasure, downgrade our future and micro-manage our lives.

It is time to limit and simplify taxes. We will stop spending money we do not have...we will get our fiscal house in order and restore our good credit...and we will repeal this President's misguided, one-size-fits-all government-run healthcare plan.

We will create jobs, build wealth, and truly educate and innovate in science, technology, engineering and math to create the jobs and progress needed to get America working again.

And I will promise you this...I will work every day to make Washington, D.C. as inconsequential in your lives as possible.

And free our families, small businesses and states from a burdensome and costly federal government so they can create, innovate and succeed.

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I believe in America.

I **believe** in Her purpose and Her promise.

I **believe** Her best days have not yet been lived.

I **believe** Her greatest deeds are reserved for generations to come.

With the help and courage of the American people, we will get our country working again.

Thank you, and God bless the United States of America.

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