

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney  
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Governor Rick Perry, the longest-serving governor in Texas and former presidential candidate, has announced that he will not be running for re-election in 2014, bringing an end to his record-setting tenure as the chief executive of the Lone Star state.

The 63-year-old Perry is considered to be one of the most powerful Texas governors to have ever held the office, serving nearly 13 years as governor and having never lost an election during his 27-year political career. Perry has been governor since December 2000 when George W. Bush left to become the nation's 43<sup>rd</sup> president.

Perry's announcement comes nearly 18 months after dropping out and ending his bid for the 2012 GOP presidential nomination, due to committing many high-profiled political gaffes. He's best known for saying "Oops" during a live televised Republican debate where he forgot the third of three federal agencies he said he wanted to eliminate if elected.

On Monday, at his news conference in San Antonio, Perry said he would continue to concentrate on finishing out his term in Texas and did not rule out another presidential run.

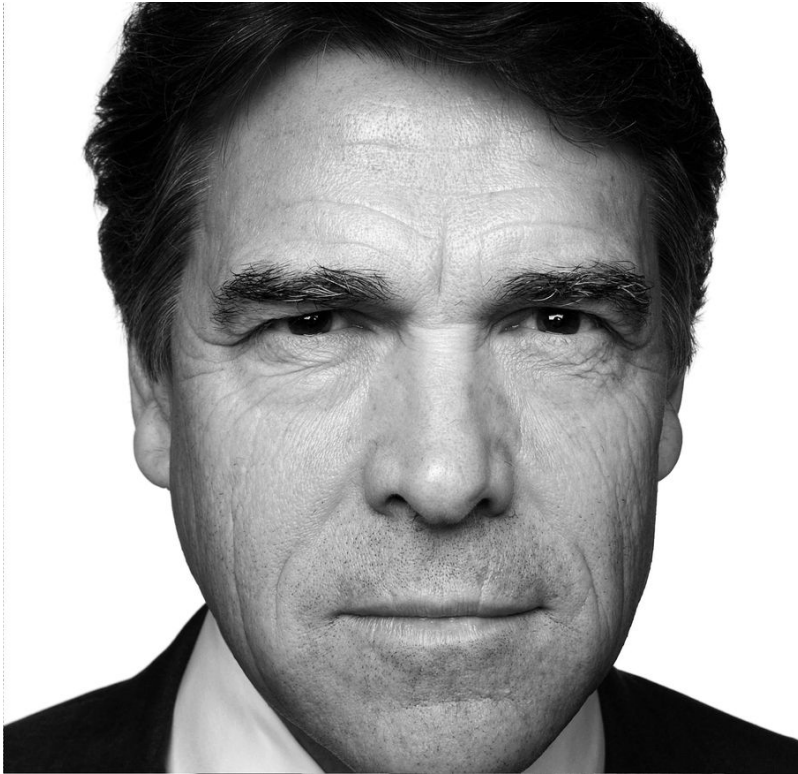
"I remain excited about the future and the challenges ahead," said Perry. "The time has come to pass on the mantle of leadership."

## CHANGING OF THE GUARD - GOVERNOR RICK PERRY WON'T SEEK RE-ELECTION IN 2014

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Governor Perry boasted about his long list of achievements, including the creation of 1.6 million new jobs in Texas and his signature on seven balanced state budgets. Perry's departure sets up the biggest political shuffle in Texas since 1990, the last time there was an open race for governor.



Before Perry's announcement, many polls showed the governor struggling in popularity among Texas voters and not even the favorite among Texans considering the White House. Republican voters in Texas said they would choose newly-elected Texas Senator Ted Cruz, Kentucky Senator Rand Paul and Florida Senator Marco Rubio over Perry in a GOP primary, according to a University of Texas at Austin/Texas Tribune poll released last month.

Many people believe the results of these polls could have been the primary catalyst for Perry's departure from the governor's office. Many others believe his departure allows him to give his full attention to put together a solid campaign team and tighten up on foreign policy and national security issues so that he can run for president again.

Whatever he decides relative to running for president, one thing that is for sure is that he will have to have a replacement.

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His departure sets up an opening for fellow Republican and longtime Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott in next year's Republican primary.

"It has been a tremendous honor to work alongside Governor Rick Perry to help lead the great State of Texas," said Abbot in a statement issued on Monday. "Our work together is not done, and over the next year and a half, we will continue our work to keep Texas the very best state for attracting jobs, raising families and advancing freedom."

Abbott, who is a rising star in the Republican Party, has been making moves as though he will run next year. He recently released a video, narrated by former senator-actor Fred Thompson, introducing himself to voters and has built an \$18 million war chest in campaign funds.

State Senator Wendy Davis of Fort Worth, who became nationally famous with her recent filibuster of an abortion bill, has been mentioned as the frontrunner for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination.

While Perry has had a historic political career, it has not been free from controversy and dissatisfaction from his dissenters.

Perry stirred controversy by suggesting that Texas could secede from the United States, because of his disagreements with President Obama's policies. He has been known to push back on new regulations from Washington, and has been a vocal critic of President Obama's national health care law. Perry has rejected millions of dollars of federal Medicaid dollars that many believe would help Texas cities and counties defray bills for uncompensated care. Texas has the highest uninsured rate in the nation, with 1 in 4 Texans lacking any health insurance at all and, according to a new report, 54 percent of Texans lack any meaningful coverage. Currently, hospitals absorb more than \$5 billion per year in uncompensated care provided to uninsured Texans who show up in our doctors' offices and emergency rooms.

In addition to the healthcare issues in Texas, one in four Texans currently live below the poverty line and Perry has slashed over five billion dollars from the budget for public education in Texas.

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Lastly, it was only a few weeks ago, when Perry had the now infamous showdown with state Senator Davis on a controversial abortion bill and what many have called a war with Texas women.

Governor Perry pledged to continue his work in Texas for the remainder of his term.

“I will spend the next 18 months working to create more jobs, opportunity and innovation. I will actively lead this great state,” he said to applause.

One thing is for certain; whoever the next governor is, will have to face a disgruntled electorate and some critical issues that will have to be addressed.

The Houston Forward Times will keep our readers abreast of who will be throwing their names in the hat to be the next Governor of Texas.