

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH RICK PERRY

SUBJECT: RICK PERRY, THE FORMER THREE-TERM GOVERNOR OF TEXAS AND A 2016 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, WILL LAY OUT AN ECONOMIC PLAN

MODERATOR: JOHN HUGHES, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

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**JOHN HUGHES:** (Sounds gavel.) Welcome to the National Press Club. My name is John Hughes. I'm an editor for Bloomberg First Word, that's Bloomberg's breaking news desk here in Washington, and I am the President of the National Press Club. Our guest today is former Texas Governor Rick Perry. He is one of 16 announced or likely candidates for the Republican Presidential nomination.

I want to introduce our distinguished head table. This group includes Press Club members and guests of our speaker. From the audience's right, Joseph Morton, Bureau Chief for the *Omaha World Herald*, and a National Press Club Board member. Evan McMorris-Santoro, White House Reporter for Buzz Feed, and a National Press Club Board member. Maria Recio, Washington Bureau Chief for McLachey's *Fort Worth Star Telegram*. Greg Strimple. He's the pollster for Governor Perry. Maureen Groppe, Washington Correspondent for *USA Today*. Rob Johnson, Chief Strategist for Governor Perry. Jerry Zremski, Chairman of the National Press Club's Speakers Committee, the Washington Bureau Chief for the *Buffalo News*, and a former President of the National Press Club.

Skipping over our speaker for a moment, Jill Lawrence, contributing Editor for *US News and World Report*. She's also the Speakers Committee member who organized today's event. Thank you very much, Jill. Jeff Miller is the campaign manager for Governor Perry. Allison Fitzgerald, Managing Editor at the Center for Public Integrity and a National Press Club Board member. Thomas Burr, Washington Correspondent for the *Salt Lake Tribune* and Vice-President of the National Press Club.

[applause]

I also want to welcome our CSPAN and Public Radio audiences. And I want to remind you that you can follow the action on Twitter. Use the hashtag NPCLunch. That's NPCLunch.

Well, for today's speaker, 2015 marks Round 2 in seeking the Republican Presidential nomination. He was unsuccessful in 2012, but there are differences this time around. And those differences go beyond the eyeglasses that give Governor Perry a new look. [laughter] He began his preparations early for this cycle, much more earlier than in 2012. And he has avoided using that word "oops" that was memorable on that 2012 campaign trail.

Governor Perry says another difference in 2016 is that this race is a "Show me, don't tell me" election. He says current and form governors, in contrast to members of Congress, are better prepared to run the country. He cites as his credentials the job creation during his 14 years as Texas Governor. He also cites his handling of the Mexican border and Hurricane Katrina refugees.

One of Perry's trademark development tools as a governor was to visit companies in other states and try to persuade them to move to Texas. In fact, in 2013, he went to Maryland in search of receptive companies, and while there, he ended up on CNN's *Crossfire*, arguing with Martin O'Malley, who was then the Governor of Maryland, and is now a Democratic Presidential candidate.

On many issues, Perry says the states should set policy, not the federal government. On that basis, he disagreed, for instance, with the recent Supreme Court decision on marriage equality. Perry has spent 30 years in one or another public office in Texas, including terms in the State Legislature, as Agriculture Commissioner, and as Lieutenant Governor and Governor.

Prior to entering public service, he was a captain in the Air Force and farmed cotton with his father. Today, he will discuss an economic opportunity plan at the National Press Club. Please join me in giving a warm welcome to former Texas Governor, Rick Perry.

[applause]

**RICK PERRY:** Thank you. It was 99 years ago, on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1916, at a Courthouse in Waco, Texas, there was a mentally disabled 17 year old boy. His name was Jesse Washington. He was convicted of raping and murdering the wife of his employer. He pled guilty, and he was sentenced to death. But Jesse died no ordinary death, because he was black. After the death sentence was issued, Jesse was dragged out of the McLennan County Courthouse, into a crowd of hundreds. And thanks to the advent

of this new technology called the telephone, word spread rather quickly to what was about to happen.

And soon there were 15,000 people watching Jesse Washington be tortured, to be mutilated, to be tied to a tree. Someone lit a fire under Jesse and raised him up in the air. Jesse tried to climb up the chains to keep from being consumed by that fire. Someone started cutting his fingers off, so that he could not climb that chain. One man castrated him. Another used a pole to prevent him from pulling himself away from the fire.

There was a prominent local photographer who took pictures of Jesse's charred remains and sold them as souvenirs on a postcard. Even today, we Texans struggle to talk about what happened to Jesse Washington. We don't want to believe that our great state could ever have been the scene of such unimaginable horror. But it is an episode in our history that we cannot ignore. It is an episode that we have an obligation to transcend. Now we made a lot of progress since 1916.

A half a century ago, Republicans and Democrats came together to finally enshrine into law the principle that all of us, regardless of race, color, of national origin, are created equal. Shedrich[?] Willis, he was a slave. This was before the Civil War. He had been bought and sold on the Courthouse steps of McLennan County, Texas, the same courthouse where Jesse Washington would later be drugged down and brought to death.

When I was the Governor of Texas, I had the proud distinction of appointing Willis, Shedrich Willis's great-great-great grandson to be the first African-American Justice on the Texas Supreme Court. In 2004, I appointed Wallace to be the Supreme Court's first Chief Justice.

You see, there are tens of thousands of stories like Wallace Jefferson's. When it comes to race, America is a better and more tolerant and more welcoming place than it's ever been before. We're a country with Hispanic CEOs, with Asian billionaires, with a black President. So why is it, today, so many black families feel left behind? Why is it that a quarter of African-Americans live below the poverty line, even after the impact of federal programs like food stamps and housing subsidies? The supplemental poverty rate for African-Americans is nearly double the rate for other Americans.

Democrats have long had the opportunity to govern the African-American communities. It is time for black families to hold them accountable for the results. And I'm here to tell you that it's Republicans, not Democrats, who are truly offering black Americans the hope for a better life for themselves and their children. I'm proud to live in a country that has an African-American President. But President Obama cannot be proud of the fact that the prevalence of black poverty has actually increased under his leadership.

We cannot dismiss the historical legacy of slavery, nor its role in causing the problem of black poverty. And because slavery and segregation were sanctioned by government, there is a role for government policy in addressing their lasting effects. But

the specific policies, advanced by the President and his allies on the left, amount to little more than throwing money at the problem and walking away.

We spend \$450 billion dollars a year on Medicaid. And yet health outcomes for those on Medicaid are no better than those who have no health insurance at all. Instead of reforming Medicaid, the President expanded it under Obamacare. In the cities where left wing solutions have been tried over and over again, places like Detroit and Chicago and Baltimore, African-Americans are moving out. And they're moving to cities like Houston and Dallas.

Listen, as Americans, I think we are all—we're all united by certain aspirations. We want access to opportunity. We want good schools for our kids. We want to live in safe neighborhoods. We want to live in cities and states where housing and college and everyday expenses are affordable. We want to all experience the American dream.

From 2005 to 2007 more African-Americans moved to Texas than all but one other state, that state being Georgia. Now many were coming from blue states, like New York and Illinois and California. Many came from Louisiana, where they had lost their homes due to Hurricane Katrina. But each one of those new residents were welcomed to Texas with open arms. They came to a state with a booming economy. We kept taxes low, regulations low. We kept frivolous lawsuits to a minimum. We worked hard to educate every child.

Now let me be clear, we have not eliminated black poverty in Texas. But we have made meaningful progress. In New York, the supplemental poverty rate for blacks is 26 percent. In California, it is 30 percent. In Washington, D.C. it is 33 percent. In Texas, it is just 20 percent. And here is how it happened. We curtailed frivolous lawsuits and unreasonable regulations. It's far cheaper to do business in Dallas or Houston than it is in Baltimore or in Detroit. And those lower costs, they get passed down to consumers, especially low income consumers in the form of lower prices.

There's a lot of talk in Washington about inequality, income inequality. But there is a lot less talk about the inequality that arises from the high cost of everyday life. In blue state coastal cities you have these strict zoning laws, environmental regulations that have prevented buildings from expanding the housing supply. And that may be great for the venture capitalist who wants to keep a nice view of San Francisco Bay. But it's not so great for the single mother working two jobs in order to pay rent and still put food on the table for her kids.

It's not just about how many dollars you earn, though there are still pretty substantial opportunities for that in the State of Texas. It's also about how far each dollar that you do earn can take you. After you've paid your taxes, you've paid your rent, your tuition, your grocery bills. In too many parts of this country, black students are trapped in failing schools, where union bosses look out after themselves at the expense of the kids. And this matters, because kids who graduate from high school typically make 50 percent more than those who don't. In Texas, we made sure that the kids came first.

Texas high school graduation rates were 27<sup>th</sup> in the nation in 2002. In 2013, they were the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in America. Our most recent graduation rate for African-Americans, number one in this country, 13 percentage points higher than the national average. [applause] That matters.

We also found a way to reduce crime, while we're also keeping kids out of jail. In 2014 Texas had the lowest crime rate since 1968. And, at the same time, we closed three prisons and reformed our sentencing laws. Too many prisons—or I should say too many Texans were going to prison for nonviolent drug offenses. And, once they got out of prison, many of them found they couldn't get a job because they had a criminal record. I'm pretty sure nobody in here gets confused that Texas is a soft on crime place. But I also believe, like Texans believe, in consequences for criminal behavior, but I also believe in second chances and human redemption, because that too is part of the American story.

Americans who suffer from an addiction need help. They don't need moral condemnation. By treating alcohol and drug abuse as a disease, we've given Texans who have experienced a run-in with the law the help that they need, the rehabilitation that many seek. And now, many of those individuals are living in recovery. They're engaged in saving the lives of others who are trapped in addiction.

You see, the human soul yearns to be free, free from the chains of addiction, free from the chains of poverty. I'm running for President because I want to make life better for all people, even those that don't vote Republican. I know Republicans have much to do to earn the trust of African-Americans. Blacks know that Republican Barry Goldwater in 1964 ran against Lyndon Johnson, who was a champion for Civil Rights. They know that Barry Goldwater opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He felt parts of it were unconstitutional. States supporting segregation in the south, they cited states' rights as a justification for keeping blacks from the voting booth and the dinner table.

As you know, I am an ardent believer in the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which was ratified in 1791, as part of our Bill of Rights. The 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment says that the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved for the states respectively, or the individual. I know that state governments are more accountable to you than the federal government. But I'm also an ardent believer in the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which says that no state shall deny any person in its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

There has been, and there will continue to be an important and a legitimate role for the federal government in enforcing Civil Rights. Too often, we Republicans, me included, have emphasized our message on the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment but not our message on the 14<sup>th</sup>. An Amendment, it bears reminding, that was one of the great contributions of Republican party to American life, second only to the abolition of slavery.

For too long, we Republicans have been content to lose the black vote, because we found we didn't need it to win. But, when we gave up trying to win the support of African-Americans, we lost our moral legitimacy as the party of Lincoln, as the party of equal opportunity for all. It's time for us, once again, to reclaim our heritage as the only party in our country founded on the principle of freedom for African-Americans.

We know what Democrats will propose in 2016, the same thing, the same things that Democrats have proposed for decades, more government spending on more government programs. And there is a proper and an important role for government assistance in keeping people on their feet. But few Presidents have done more to expand government assistance than President Obama. Today we spend nearly one trillion dollars a year on means tested antipoverty programs. And yet, black poverty remains stagnant.

Here is what I have seen in my time in public office. The best welfare program in America is a job. [applause] There is a fundamental reason why Democratic policies have failed to cure poverty, is because the only true cure for poverty is a job. And Democratic policies have made it too hard for the poor to find a job. Just this week, the President announced new regulations for overtime pay that will make it costlier for companies to hire full-time employees. Companies are going to respond to this by hiring fewer people, simply because money doesn't grow on trees.

So my first priority as President of this country will be to reignite the engine of economic growth by reforming the tax code, requiring federal agencies to adhere to strict regulatory budgets. A growing economy will give those at the bottom of the ladder more opportunities to climb, just like we did in Texas.

Many poor Americans want to leave welfare. They want to rejoin the workforce. But, because of taxes and regulations, it often makes more economic sense to stay on welfare than to take that full-time job. Furthermore, federal programs impose a one-size-fits-all approach to fighting poverty. You think about this, in California, you may be substantially more in need for money to pay for the cost of housing, because of the high cost of housing in that state. In Massachusetts, it may be the cost of vocational school that you're more interested in. Instead, we force the poor to enroll in these separate programs for housing assistance and for Pell grants.

If I'm elected President, I'm going to send Congress a welfare reform bill that will take the money that we already spend on non-healthcare related anti-poverty programs, and split them into two parts. The first part will be an expanded and reformed version of the Earned Income Tax Credit, so that anyone with a job can live above the poverty level. The second part will consist of a block grant so that states can care and put into place that safety net for their population in a manner that best serves their citizens.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the most important things that we did in Texas while I was Governor was to reform our drug-related sentencing laws, so that nonviolent offenders could stay out of prison. As Texans got smarter about policing and crime prevention, we came to appreciate the importance of keeping promising young people out

of prison. Just imagine how hard it is to get a job if you've got a criminal record. We're working to stop the intergenerational cycle of incarceration, where grandchildren meet their grandparents behind prison bars. We can reform the federal sentencing laws just as we've done at the state level, to ensure more young people have a real shot at life. And we can do so while keeping our low income communities safe from crime as well.

We all know, we all know we have to improve our schools. This is an area where President Obama had some substantial potential, but he caved into the demands of the labor unions. It is a fallacy to assume that the vastly different student populations across this country can be adequately educated with a one-size-fits-all mentality in policy. We need to empower state lawmakers, the school boards, the parents to implement policies that address the specific needs of their students, and to keep those schools accountable and efficient.

You know, enterprising charter school teachers, like Eva Moskowitz up in New York, you know, they should be able to replicate their astounding success all across this country without the interference of the federal government. And we also have to attack this challenge that we have with the exorbitant price of a college education today.

One of the biggest barriers today into entering into the middle class, whether you're black or otherwise, is the high cost of a college degree. A four-year degree at the typical private university in this country costs \$170,000 dollars. Now compare that to the medium home price in this country, is \$205,000 dollars. We are literally asking poor students to mortgage their future in order to gain a college degree. And that has to end. It must end.

In Texas, I challenged our state universities to offer a four-year college degree for less than \$10,000 dollars. Now many thought that that would be impossible. You just couldn't drive tuition and fees that low. But today, there are 13 Texas universities that have reached that target.

[applause]

We're on the cusp of an online revolution in higher education, but only if the federal government rolls back the rules that make it almost impossible for students to gain accreditation for a Bachelors Degree achieved from online instruction. Furthermore, just as with college tuition, we have to reduce the cost of living for those who need every dollar to be stretched as far as it can go.

Federal regulations, like Obamacare's employer mandate, they are driving up the cost of hiring new workers. That means that companies are hiring fewer people. It also means that the price of basic consumer goods are going up. Earlier this year, the Competitive Enterprise Institute estimated that the federal regulations cost American businesses as much as \$1.88 trillion dollars per year. That's nearly \$15,000 dollars per household in this country. When you add state regulations to it, the problem just gets even worse.

I will suggest to you, if we'll do five things, if we create jobs, if we incentivize work, if we keep nonviolent drug offenders out of prison, if we reform our schools, and we reduce the cost of living, we will have done more for African-Americans than the last three Democrat administrations combined.

At the American Cemetery in Normandy, above Omaha Beach, there are 9,387 American soldiers buried, in row after orderly row. If ever proof were needed that we fought for a cause and not a conquest, an American General once said, "It could be found in these cemeteries." Here was our only conquest, all we asked was enough soil in which to bury our gallant dead. Some of those gallant dead in that cemetery were sons of a United States President. But most were ordinary Americans, simply doing what their country had asked them to do.

Some of the graves don't even have names. They simply are marked "Here rests, in honored glory, a comrade in arms known but to God." Some of the most compelling graves at Normandy are for African-Americans who served in segregated regiments, like Willie Collins for the 490<sup>th</sup> Port Battalion. Willie Collins made the ultimate sacrifice for America, despite the fact that America didn't always treat him the way he deserved.

Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. and Sergeant Willie Collins grew up in very different circumstances. See Ted's ancestors had a Coat of Arms. Willie's ancestors came here in chains. But Ted and Willie, they joined—joined themselves together. With this commitment that every generation of Americans have embraced, the promise of leaving America and the world a better place than they found it, of ensuring a better future for the children and grandchildren of those to come. I am a beneficiary of the sacrifices of Sergeant Collins and General Roosevelt and so many others known only to God.

I grew up in this place called Paint Creek. When I was young, we had an outhouse. Mama bathed us on the front porch in a number 2 wash tub. [laughter] We attended Paint Creek School. Some of our teachers literally lived on that campus. Their profession was literally their lives. And they inspired me. And I can assure you that none of them knew, had any idea that they would be educating a future Captain in the United States Air Force, and certainly not a future Governor of Texas. They've got a motto at the Paint Creek School that summarizes the endless possibilities for its students. It says, "No dream too tall for a school so small." [laughter]

Many people today don't feel that their lives are filled with that endless possibilities anymore. Americans entering adulthood today have good reason to fear it will be harder for them to earn a living, to buy a home, to pay off their debts as their parents did. But, if there is one thing that we can learn from Willie Collins and the millions like him, from the tragedy of Jesse Washington and the triumph of Wallace Jefferson, it's that America has overcome far greater obstacles than the ones that we face today. Willie Collins died in the belief that America could become a better country than the one that he left home to serve, and he was right.

It's up to us to be worthy of the country that Willie Collins' generation gave us. It's up to us to leave our country better off than we found it. America has never been perfect. No country composed of imperfect beings ever could be. But there is no country that has achieved more than the United States of America. And with new leadership, and with durable reforms, America can be stronger, more prosperous than it's ever been before. America can be this incredibly exceptional place, where nothing in life is guaranteed, but where we all have equal opportunity to build a better life for ourselves, for our children, and for our children's children. Thank you and God bless you.

[applause]

**JOHN HUGHES:** Thank you, Governor Perry. The Congressional Budget Office has forecast the Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security spending to grow precipitously in coming years. These are programs that have had a role in helping the people that you describe in your speech, as well as all Americans who have been in poverty. So, if you were to become President, how would you tackle the growth in that entitlement spending, while at the same time protecting those who are in poverty that you want to help?

**RICK PERRY:** And John, I think I addressed that in my remarks, to some degree. But I'll expand a bit. I do think that one-size-fits-all is not the solution, because we've been trying that for a long time. And that hasn't been working. So I think, as you will go back and recall in my remarks, I talked about splitting that pot of money into two things, one of them to be to create this earned income tax credit, where we actually give people incentives to work.

And obviously, the other side of it is to make sure that we have as many novel ideas and approaches, if you will. Louis Brandeis said that. And Louis Brandeis, not known as a hardcore conservative Supreme Court member. But he said that the states were the laboratories of democracy. States were supposed to experiment. They were supposed to go out and put novel ideas into place. That that was where you would find the truly innovative concepts. And he said, from time to time, a state will make a mistake. And they'll pay a price for that.

When I read those remarks, I think about Colorado today, you know. But I will defend Colorado's right to be wrong. [laughter] But the point is, that I think that is where we will find the efficiencies. That's where we'll find the innovation in this country, not in Washington, D.C., but back in the states, and putting these programs in a place, and letting those states in particular with these program, like Medicaid, to come up with various and different ideas about how to deliver to their citizens.

**JOHN HUGHES:** How about the overall growth in the size of those programs. Do they need to be means tested, so people like myself, who are a little bit better off, maybe, retire later, get less Medicare? How do you handle the growth in the size?

**RICK PERRY:** I don't have a problem at all in means testing. I'm pretty sure that Donald Trump can do without Medicare. [laughter] But in the seriousness of it is, that is a—Means testing does make sense to me. I think that people who have enjoyed the extraordinary benefits of this country and have become wealthy in that, the idea that they have to be in line for all of those programs is not—it doesn't make sense to me. You know, with all the other entitlement programs—During the course of this campaign, I will lay out a very broad approach to this, and lay out a lot of different ideas about how to address Social Security, how to address Medicare, Medicaid, all of those government programs. Today is not that day.

**JOHN HUGHES:** On the issue of tax reform, can you give us any more detail on how you would reform the tax code, and how you would use it to reduce income inequality?

**RICK PERRY:** Yeah. Again, I'm going to lay out a very lengthy plan over the course of the campaign. But let me just say, to tease you a little bit, obviously we got the highest score for tax rate in the western world. Lowering that corporate tax rate. Two things attached together, I think, make a lot of sense. North American energy policy, Canada, the United States, and Mexico have more known energy reserves than Saudi Arabia and Russia. Using those resources, partly by lowering the regulatory burden that's there, with a commitment from the White House that we're going to use North American energy, opening up the XL Pipeline is an obvious way to do that. Mexico is going to—They've changed their Constitution to be able to allow for the private sector development of their energy resources in that country. I think there is extraordinary potential in Mexico. Obviously, our domestic and our shale gas, along with the Canadians.

You couple that energy development—Because what that will do, will drive down the cost of electricity. You couple that with corporate tax policy coming down that will send the incentive to the manufacturers who've left this country to go offshore, to come back into this country, and we can have a manufacturing renaissance in this country like we have never seen before. [applause]

**JOHN HUGHES:** Governor, what would be your approach for getting tax reform done? It's stalled on Capitol Hill. So many special interests are working the issues so hard. How would you come to Washington and actually enact the tax reform?

**RICK PERRY:** Well, this would not be my first rodeo, is a term that we would use down in Texas. And the 30 years that I have been engaged in public service, whether it was as state representative through a statewide elected official, and then 14 years as the Governor of the State of Texas, we worked with Democrats and Republicans. And we sold some pretty—We sold some pretty big programs in the State of Texas that none of those programs were done with just Republican support, not a one of them, not the tort reform, the most sweeping tort reform in the nation. And I will suggest to you, that's not an easy sell anywhere, to pass reforms to our legal system that really made a big impact.

And let me tell you what the result of that tort reform in the State of Texas was, that we passed in 2003. A decade later, we had 35,000 more physicians licensed to practice medicine in the State of Texas. It expanded by this extraordinary amount the number of physicians that were practiced—that were licensed to practice medicine. That meant that access to healthcare exploded in that state. That was passed, not just with Republican votes.

And I think, as I shared in my remarks, there are a lot of things that we agree on together, whether it's living in safe communities, whether it's having a good job, whether it's having schools that are improving and giving children the opportunity to succeed in life, find those things we agree on, bring Democrats and Republicans together, and I will suggest to you having a job out there for your constituents, whether you're a Democrat or a Republican, is an important and a good thing.

And, if we can lower the corporate tax rate, and that being the result, is having jobs for our young people in this country, then I think Democrats and Republicans can come together. The hell with K Street. This is about the Americans' future. And that's who I think we reach out to, and we talk to. And, when the American people stand up and say, "This is where we want to go," regardless of whether you're a Democrat or a Republican, you're an American. And we're going to get this done.

[applause]

**JOHN HUGHES:** As you reach out to African-American voters, what about the confederate flag that's been in the news recently? Should all the flags come down or not? And then, another questioner asks, how can the Republican party appeal to African-Americans when it favors state laws that limit voting rights? So what about the voting right laws and the confederate flag issue?

**RICK PERRY:** Let me address them as you asked them. We have come out clearly and said that, you know, the issue of the confederate flag in Charleston is up to the people of South Carolina. But we addressed this issue in Texas while I was the Governor in a number of ways. One was with a plaque that had that battle flag on it, and it was removed from the Capitol over to another place in a more of a museum setting. And we dealt with the issue of the license plates. And we forbid those license plates to be sold. So in my state, we dealt with it, I think, straightaway.

I think it makes sense to come up with the ways to bring this country together, not to divide us. And all too often, I have seen this President divide us by race, divide us by gender, divide us by economic means. And we need a President who will bring this country together, with a record of bringing this country together, or bringing, in my case, our state together on a host of different issues.

I don't think there's a more powerful way that I can say to an African-American than I gave your child the opportunity to see, let them graduate from high school. What a powerful message that you live in the state where the number one high school graduation

rate is. That's a powerful message. Oh, and by the way, we let you keep more of your money, too. That's a powerful, powerful message.

This issue of whoever's concept that is, that we are trying to keep people from voting, that's just—that is a false assumption. That's not what this is about at all. This is the protection of a very, very important right that we have in this country, and that's the right to vote, and to keep that from being fraudulently used. In the State of Texas—and I'll address my home state of dealing with this—we gave multiple ways to get a photo I.D. up to and including free. All you had to do was come and get that I.D. You can use driver's license. You could use concealed handgun license permits. You can use your Passports. I mean there are a host of different photo I.D.s that you can use so that you can vote. But keeping that from being fraudulently used.

I mean, as I go through TSA to fly from here to New Hampshire in the morning, they're going to want to see my photo I.D. And I think if it's important enough for the federal government to require a photo I.D., that if a state wants to have a photo I.D. to protect that precious right of voting, and to make sure that it is not fraudulently used, then I think that's quite all right for those states to do that.

[applause]

**JOHN HUGHES:** I had some questions on reaching out to Latino voters as well. Will you and other Republicans make an effort to specifically reach out to Latino voters? And do comments such as Donald Trump's recent comments on immigration hurt? And do other positions on immigration hurt? How can the Republican field reach out and get the Latino vote?

**RICK PERRY:** Well, let me say, I don't think Donald Trump's remarks reflect the Republican party. I think the Republican party is reflected in people like me. It's reflected in individuals like Eva Guzman, who was the first Latina that was appointed to the Texas Supreme Court, individuals in our state—By the way, if you are Hispanic and you live in Texas, you are 40 percent more likely to have a job. You are two and a half times more likely to have a job—or, I should say, own a small business in that state.

Last election cycle, last November, the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor of Texas, they received 45 percent of the Hispanic vote in our state. And this is a Lieutenant Governor, in particular, who was strong as he could be on border security. But, what the Hispanic voter in Texas knows, is the Governor who had been there for 14 years, and the Governor who was coming in, cared about their family. They cared about their children and cared about their children so much so that they made sure that they were living in a state that their kids had an opportunity to succeed, because they had the number one graduation rate in America. They got to keep more of what they worked for. They knew that there was a government in place that represented their values and protected them and kept them secure. I mean that's a powerful message for Hispanic, African-American, Asian, whoever you may want to be identified with.

But we are Americans. And I think, at the heart of this, is how are we going to make this country stronger economically, security-wise? And I have a record of doing that. That's what I say when I talk about, this is a "Show me, don't tell me" election. This is going to be about who has the record of actually delivering? In the 12<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world, it is unquestionable what we have done from the standpoint of creating a climate where people have a better quality of life, better quality of life, whether it's economically, whether it's security-wise. I mean that's a powerful message across this country.

And I think we had the—I think we have a great message for the Hispanic community, for individuals who want to live free, who want to be able to take care of their family, who want to live in a secure world. The Republican party is where they need to be looking.

**JOHN HUGHES:** I had some questions following up on the Supreme Court decision on gay marriage last week. Does Governor Perry agree with the public statements made by Texas Attorney General, Ken Paxton, in which he says Texas county clerks could deny the issuances of marriage licenses to same sex couples on the grounds of religious beliefs?

**RICK PERRY:** Well, here is what I agree with. I agree with four Supreme Court justices, the thought that that issue needed to stay with the states. And you know, we can have a broad sweeping conversation about the 14<sup>th</sup> versus the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment, and all the intricacies of that. But I believe, with all my heart, and I agree with those four justices, that those decisions need to be left with the states. And that the states will come up with a way to address those issues, and a host of other issues, you know, whether it's economic issues, or educational issues, or transportation infrastructure issues, I will suggest to you that we are creating a greater and greater divide in this country between people who believe this way, and people who believe that way, with these very divisive issues.

And I happen to think that we will be a happier country, as well as a more prosperous country, if we will allow these states to be the arbiters of those issues. Because I'm pretty sure, at some time down the road, folks who may have agreed with that five to four decision may find that the next time, they don't agree with it. And speaking of that, the next President of the United States could possibly choose up to three members of the United States Supreme Court.

**JOHN HUGHES:** How do you intend to stand out in this GOP field that's now, I believe, 15 strong, that we said? And what kind of challenges does that present as you're running? And is there a risk that the candidates end up grinding each other down so much, with so much competition, that it weakens them for the general?

**RICK PERRY:** Well, let me say to the National Press Club, thank you for the opportunity to stand up in front of this group and differentiate myself from the rest of them. [laughter] And in all seriousness, I am a unique candidate. I am a unique candidate

in where I came from. My life's experiences of growing up on that dry land cotton farm, my life's experience of growing up as a Democrat, my life experiences of going to school and having the opportunity to go serve my country, I am pretty sure I will be the only person that's either a candidate or on that stage who has actually been a line officer, been deployed around the globe as a pilot in the United States Air Force. I lived in Saudi Arabia in 1975, as well as in Turkey and many of those other countries in the Middle East and in Europe, South America.

I will have been the only one of those individuals who had the experience of being Commander in Chief during this entire period of this war on terror, seeing our young men and women deployed into those theatres of operation, that I had been there with them. But, more importantly, been at home to see the cost of this war, of these wars. Looked into the eyes of the spouses, of the parents who lost their loved ones, looking into the eye of young Americans who held their hand up and said, "Here am I, send me," who have come home, and who feel like they have been left behind.

Because we have agencies of government, the VA in particular, that is not serving them well. They need a champion in the White House. They need a champion that goes to the Oval Office every day, to defend their sacrifices, to deliver to them the services that we promised. And we're failing them today. Those experiences are unique. No one else on that stage, no one has that background, has that experience. And I will suggest to you, after eight years of a young, inexperienced United States Senator, with no Executive experience, that Americans are going to be looking for a leader, a person with a known record, and a record of success.

[applause]

**JOHN HUGHES:** Before I ask the final question, I have some housekeeping. The National Press Club is the world's leading professional organization for journalists. And we fight for a free press worldwide. For more information about the Club, visit our website, [Press.org](http://Press.org). And to donate to our nonprofit Journalism Institute, visit [Press.org/institute](http://Press.org/institute). I would also like to remind you about some upcoming programs.

Next Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, Washington Capitals coach Barry Trotz will address the National Press Club Luncheon. On July 14<sup>th</sup>, Tom Young, who served as a National Guard flight engineer in Afghanistan will discuss his book *The Hunters*. And on August 5<sup>th</sup>, the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, Admiral Paul Zukunft will speak.

I'd now like to present our guest with the traditional National Press Club mug, Governor Perry. [applause]

**RICK PERRY:** I'm all set. Here. Turn it that way, so they can get that good picture.

**JOHN HUGHES:** Now unfortunately, it's not perfect for the campaign trail because it is breakable. But, when you get back in Texas, I think you'll enjoy coffee out

of that. And so the final question, you have said that, in the “Show me” aspect of running for President, that really, a governor is most suited, So, if you are not fortunate enough to be one of the 15 that comes out and gets the nomination, should it be Governor Christie, Governor Walker, Governor Bush? Which governor would best carry the mantle if you can't?

**RICK PERRY:** Well, let me say, I know all three of those other individuals. And they are absolutely amazingly capable individuals. We have a great field. Carly Fiorina and I have known each other for a long time. Carly is a particularly capable CEO. I have negotiated with her, as we moved Hewlett Packard's operation out of California to Texas. Carly did a very good job. Now, I won't say that her being born in Texas had anything to do with the final decision there. [laughter] But there, this is a very capable field of men and women.

I just happen to believe that the next President of the United States—I will use the words of Lindsey Graham that the next President of the United States needs to have worn the uniform of the country. And I happen to think it needs to be an executive who has run something rather large. Thank you.

[applause]

**JOHN HUGHES:** Thank you Governor Perry. How about another round of applause for our speaker. [applause] I would also like to thank the National Press Club Staff, including our Journalism Institute staff and Broadcast Center for organizing today's event. If you would like a copy of today's program, or to learn more about the National Press Club, go to that website, [press.org](http://press.org). Thank you. We are adjourned.

[applause]

[gavel]

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