I am honored to be here today with my friend David Dewhurst, Chairman Carrillo, the fine Texan I was proud to appoint to this great agency, two other outstanding Railroad Commissioners, Michael Williams and Charles Matthews, and the members of an industry that has employs a great many Texans, creates great wealth, and helped inspire the Texas Legacy as a land of opportunity, our energy producers.

The state of the energy industry in Texas is not just important to Texans, it is important to all Americans. Texas energy powers the nation, supplying 28 percent of onshore domestic oil, and 35 percent of onshore domestic natural gas. 41 percent of the rigs being run in the United States today are in Texas.

The number of drilling permits are on the rise, and Texas is now a potential sight for several Liquefied Natural Gas plants that will mean billions more invested in our economy, and the creation of new jobs. I have long been a proponent of increased energy production, the development of cleaner resources, and the continued creation of jobs and opportunity in our energy sector. Job creation and education are the foundation for a future of prosperity and opportunity in Texas. We can't have a future of prosperity and economic growth without an educated workforce. And we can't have an educated workforce unless our schools focus on educational excellence.

This week I have announced several proposals as part of an educational excellence plan that shifts the focus of our public schools from minimum standards to maximum achievement. Educational excellence is critical to producing the skilled labor force employers need to grow and prosper in Texas. The successful doctors, engineers and leaders of our future are today setting foot in kindergarten, sitting in a sixth grade classroom, and learning their equations in high school. It is their promise, their potential, that must be fulfilled by a new focus on educational excellence.

Our economy has long depended on an educated workforce, and for decades the energy industry has depended on skilled workers. That’s why I created a new Texas Energy Council that is being led by Chairman Victor Carrillo. Texas needs an energy plan that will lead to greater production, and the creation of jobs and new wealth for our people. I also believe we must continue to lead the way in the development of cleaner forms of energy. Through a focus on the development of clean energy, diversification of our energy supplies, and a greater emphasis on energy conservation, we can lower prices for consumers, create thousands of new jobs, and make Texas and America less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

At the same time, I am hopeful, following recent discussion with Mexican President Vicente Fox, that we can develop
a stronger partnership between the Texas energy sector and the Mexican energy sector. As Mexico looks to involve more private partners, Texas companies have a great chance to participate in greater development, and greater exchanges, of energy resources. We must not only continue to push for more domestic production, but more investment by our energy companies in foreign markets, especially Mexico.

As governor, I value the vital role employers and job creators have in this state. You generate jobs and opportunity, wealth and prosperity, for our people and our communities. Whether you are a big employer, or a small one that wants to one day be big, you are making a tremendous difference. Keep creating jobs, keep driving the engine of progress, and know that while some may see you as a source of revenue to fund government, I see you as generators of wealth and opportunity for a great many Texans.

Thank you, and God bless Texas.