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Gov. Rick Perry: State Appointees are Partners in Building a Better Texas
*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.
Friday, May 23, 2008

Thank you, Brian [Newby] for that introduction and for riding herd on the operation around here. I want to thank all of you for being here today and for your commitment to the great state of Texas. Today, you are seated with people who share a unique distinction- you are a Perry appointee.

Some reporters will use that phrase as a disparaging term, but I would offer that you are part of a distinguished group of difference-makers. That title does also put a bit of a bulls eye on your back, but part of the screening process was making sure you can handle the heat. My position on issues might get more coverage in the press than the people I appoint, but I believe that my ability to appoint people like you is one of the most significant powers of this office because it truly shapes the direction of this state. That's why I am so grateful for your willingness to serve. Many of you have made room in your busy schedules to serve on boards and commissions, not because the pay is good, rather, because it's a chance to make a positive difference. I want you to know I value your service and your sacrifice for Texas. Let me begin by stating very clearly what I expect of people I appoint.

You are here because you have strong qualifications, a shared vision for prosperity and service, and a willingness to put that shared philosophy into action for the State of Texas. Avoiding conflict is not in your job description. In fact you'll be taking some issues head-on that you'd just as soon leave for your replacement. But we all need to have a certain sense of urgency in our approach. We all must be diplomatic, but I expect you to roll up your sleeves, ask a lot of questions of your executive directors and other agency leaders, and become intimately familiar with the finances of your agency.

Here is why: this Administration does not believe in standing on the status quo. The notion that "it's always been done that way" is not a valid motivation for any decision. We must be advocates of change when those changes mean a more efficient and effective delivery of services for the people of Texas. Some agencies are innovative and passionate in their efforts to be efficient and effective. But there are some of you who just might run into a different mindset. There is the slimmest of chances you might run up against someone who lets you know, "I was here before you were appointed, and I will be here long after you are gone." But let's be clear: you have an important oversight role at your agency and I expect you to set the direction for your agency. Ask the tough questions and make the tough decisions. That's why you are there.

Let me finish by talking about my philosophy for governing. I am not an anti-government conservative, I am a limited
government conservative. I believe government should do a few things, but do them well. To be honest, I don't get hung up on the process. I care about the results—attained ethically, legally and appropriately every time. If the private sector can do something better than the public sector, then government should be willing to outsource services. At the same time, there are certain agencies that can make a strong case for a larger investment, such as parks. Keeping an eye on the people's purse strings is not merely about cutting spending, it's also about wise spending, and in some cases that means spending more.

I ask for your help, ideas and idealism. I want you to know you are a partner in the important effort to build a better Texas. If ever you need help, we have a strong appointments staff and executive staff that can help you accomplish your goals. That's why they are here. So get to know them and get ready to make a difference. The people of Texas and their governor only ask one thing of you: YOUR BEST.

Thank you for your service to Texas, and God bless you all.