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## THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

### The Brief: Texas Political News for Nov. 19, 2013

by [John Reynolds](#) | November 19, 2013 | [31 Comments](#)



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photo by: Bob Daemmrich

Gov. Rick Perry heads into a west Austin early voting site on Oct. 30, 2013.

#### The Big Conversation

And just like that, it seems, talk about a **Rick Perry** reboot in 2016 has taken over the conversation in Austin.

The reinvention of Perry as presidential candidate goes beyond the decision to sport [new eyeglasses](#), says The Texas Tribune's **Ross Ramsey**. In a Monday column, Ramsey [posited](#) the new Perry strategy as finding a middle path between the flavors of the month in the GOP field — Tea Party favorite **Ted Cruz** and newly re-elected New Jersey Gov. **Chris Christie**.

"In a surprising twist, [Perry] looks like a conservative establishment candidate as the jockeying begins for the 2016 presidential race," Ramsey wrote. "He is still anti-Washington, still steeped in states' rights and Tea Party rhetoric, still quite conservative, but not quite so eager to burn down the castle. He is turning into Cruz's big brother: It's the same family, but Perry wants to be the one you trust with the car keys."

Ramsey noted that Perry is no stranger to reinvention, reminding everyone that he worked with the **Al Gore** presidential campaign in 1988 before remaking himself as a Republican to run for statewide office two years later.



The *Austin American-Statesman's* **Jonathan Tilove** [picked up](#) on this strain of the conversation in writing up Perry's appearance before a friendly audience at the Texas Public Policy Foundation designed to talk up Texas at the expense of California. Perry showed up late for the event, a victim of Austin traffic.

"Perry's late arrival," Tilove wrote, "was the only glitch in an otherwise flawless occasion that demonstrated why a Perry presidential campaign, in just the right light, still seems plausible, and the reasons why Perry — merging conservative bona fides, executive experience and his casual charm — seemed such a formidable candidate for president in 2012 before he wasn't."

This level of pre-positioning, if it's accurate to describe it as such, stands in marked contrast to Perry's late entry into the 2012 contest. **Mark Halperin** and **John Heilemann**, in town on Monday night to discuss their new book on the 2012 presidential election, *Double Down*, reminded the audience that Perry's entry into the race frightened eventual GOP nominee **Mitt Romney**.

In the end, the two authors said, what did Perry in was his late entry into the race and his decision to have back surgery. Insomnia related to his recovery from the surgery led to the unsteady moments that doomed his campaign, most notably his ["oops" moment](#) in the Nov. 9, 2011, Republican presidential debate.

It also means that the political press will be watching extra closely the second time out for anything that could be plausibly described as another "oops" moment. Take, for instance, the kicker at the end of [a story](#) by *The Dallas Morning News's* **Christy Hoppe** earlier this month on Perry's return to Iowa:

"When you're at this caliber of politics, it's like you're a professional athlete,' [**John Sevier** of Iowa City] said. 'You can't drop the ball. It's a big spotlight, and you have to perform every single time.'

"It is not a struggle Perry has mastered.

"After an Iowa luncheon sponsored by Americans for Prosperity — a group he has worked with frequently — he stood in front of a large banner with its logo and name, looked into the phalanx of cameras and began: 'Americans for Economic Progress [is] a great organization.'"



## Culled

- **Rick Perry: 'Texas wins'** (*Houston Chronicle*): "Gov. **Rick Perry** was bragging on Texas again Monday as he mulls another presidential race, using a new study by economist and

longtime supporter **Arthur Laffer** as reason to say the Lone Star State has California (and other blue states) beat."

- [Texas officials from both parties want to extend high-risk insurance pool](#) (*Austin American-Statesman*): "Following the tumultuous rollout of the federally run health insurance marketplaces, Lt. Gov. **David Dewhurst** on Monday asked Texas' insurance commissioner to delay the termination of the state's high-risk pool. ... His request echoed that of state Sen. **Kirk Watson**, D-Austin, who made a similar request last week."
- [Aced tests likely led to HISD cheating suspicions](#) (*Houston Chronicle*): "One hundred percent of English-speaking third-graders at Jefferson Elementary passed state exams in reading and math last school year. That perfect performance likely is part of HISD's ongoing investigation into possible cheating there. ... The Houston Independent School District has released few details about the investigation into alleged cheating at Jefferson on the city's north side and at Atherton Elementary in the Fifth Ward. But analyzing test scores and interviewing students and staff are standard in similar probes HISD has conducted in recent years."

*Quote to Note:* "The discussion's over. The debate's over. The proof is in. Texas wins." — Gov. **Rick Perry**, declaring the contest for best state over

## Must-Read

- [City workers remove white "X's" in Dealey Plaza that marked where Kennedy was shot](#), *The Dallas Morning News*
- ['Illegal immigrant game' at UT condemned](#), *Houston Chronicle*
- [Lt. Gov. candidates hope to prove they are the most conservative](#), *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*
- [John Cornyn to file bill to combat human trafficking](#), *The Dallas Morning News*

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