

# Would Rick Perry Crack Down on Illegal Immigration as President? AUDIO

by [Scott](#) on August 16, 2011



Gov. Rick Perry with Border Sheriffs

One of the most pressing issues for conservative Republican primary voters is illegal immigration. It's also an issue that could prove troublesome for Gov. Perry in his presidential bid.

The question of border security is something that has long been considered “red meat” for conservative grassroots activists whose support is crucial in Republican primaries.

Tea Party activists have questioned whether Gov. Perry is truly committed to cracking down on illegal immigrants and those who hire them in Texas. [Dallas Tea Party](#) founder Ken Emanuelson and others have [asked Perry to call lawmakers back to Austin](#) for a second special session this year to address so-called “Sanctuary City” legislation. If passed, it would prohibit police chiefs and sheriff's from telling their officers they can't enforce federal immigration laws.

There were multiple “anti-illegal immigration” bills filed during the legislature's regular session this year. None of them became law.

“They engaged in this kind of elaborate [kabuki dance](#) to make it look like they were all supporting it, when in fact they were working behind the scenes to kill it,” Emanuelson said.

Former immigration adviser to Gov. and President Bush, [Charles Foster](#), said it's true that lawmakers did do a “Texas two-step” around this issue. There were backroom deals happening at the Capitol, he said, to ensure none of these “harsh” immigration bills would pass. “It's true and it's good,” Foster said. “They realized it was bad legislation to begin with. At best, it would have been symbolic.”

Foster doubts Gov. Perry, who has talked tough on immigration in the past, will really be someone who would “crack down” on illegal immigrants. “If he’s elected he would have to set aside that rhetoric and deal with the realities, rather than the soundbites,” Foster said.

[Click here to listen to Charles Foster \(Right click to download\)](#)

Other parts of Gov. Perry’s record on immigration could be considered “mixed.” He’s actively pushed the legislature to approve more funding for border sheriffs. That helped propel him to re-election in 2006 when he faced 3 general election challengers.

To the [disgust of many conservatives](#), he also signed the law that allows illegal immigrants to get in-state tuition for universities in Texas. He defended that decision last year while running for re-election by saying the immigrants in question have lived here most of their lives and should be given a shot at being productive members of this society.

“To punish these young Texans for their parents’ actions is not what America has always been about,” Perry said.