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# **Gov. Rick Perry: Free Trade, Job Creation and Education Are Key to Texas' Future**

*Perry Also Calls for Series of Border Discussions to Review US-VISIT Program at LULAC Speech*

AUSTIN – In a speech to the League of United Latin American Citizens National Convention, Gov. Rick Perry today said that free trade, job creation and education are key ingredients to the future economic success of Texas. Perry also called for a series of border discussions to allow for public input on the federal government's US-VISIT program.

“Job creation and education are, and always will be, the cornerstones of my administration because economic prosperity and the ability to provide for one's family are an important part of the American dream,” Perry said. “Today, the American dream is alive and well because of the ideas and contributions of so many entrepreneurs and working families, including many Hispanic-owned businesses, right here in Texas.”

Perry said that during a trade mission last month to Mexico he reached an agreement with Mexican business and political leaders to tear down barriers to economic progress and job creation. This commitment includes Perry's insistence on removing any potential roadblocks to legitimate trade and travel that may be created by the new federal US-VISIT program.

“Today I am announcing that my office will be working with federal and local officials in the coming months to host border community discussions to ensure that Texas' concerns are heard and addressed as the federal government begins implementation of the US-VISIT program along our border with Mexico,” Perry said. “We must ensure our border is secure while maintaining the free flow of commerce between our nations.”

The governor also said that the most important investment that Texas can make in its future is in education.

“An educated American is an unlimited American,” he said. “As we look to the future, education reform must not be based on the number of students that meet minimum standards, but the number of students who excel.”

Citing the financial commitment he and the Texas Legislature have made in education – \$7.1 billion over the past six years, including \$1.2 billion last year – Perry said the state’s investment is paying off.

Perry said he wants to reward schools that encourage students who take the hardest course of study, who achieve commended performance on state tests who take gateway courses like Algebra and who stay in school and graduate.

“When a child drops out, a wall is erected that stands between their dreams and the opportunity to fulfill those dreams,” he said.

Perry also highlighted his recommendations that the state increase spending on bilingual education by \$100 million to help those students who face additional challenges of learning English.

“I believe that we must tell our children, ‘It doesn’t matter what your first language is, your success and your future are our first priority,’” Perry said.