



## **Governor Greg Abbott's Announcement Speech**

*Note: Remarks for Governor Abbott as prepared.*

The only thing better than being in the Rio Grande Valley, is being here with my wife Cecilia. Give it up for the fabulous First Lady for our great state. She is a loving mother and wife, a former teacher and principal, and the first Hispanic First Lady in the history of Texas.

It is great to be back in the Rio Grande Valley. And it is great to be with Hispanic leaders from the Rio Grande Valley and across our state. Hispanics are really Republicans at heart. You are doing your part to keep Texas red.

I'm back in the Rio Grande Valley because I care so much about this region. I've been the Rio Grande Valley more than any Governor in the history of Texas. But I've done more than just visit the Rio Grande Valley. I have delivered for the Rio Grande Valley.

Before I was Governor, South Texas had no Level 1 Trauma Center. I promised that you would get a Level 1 Trauma Center, and now the Rio Grande Valley has one, right here in Hidalgo County.

I promised more high education opportunities. And now the Rio Grande Valley has the Texas A&M Higher Education Center in McAllen.

I promised more roads. We've provided more than \$2 billion in road funding for the Rio Grande Valley since I've been Governor.

To ensure that you will have the power that you need to meet the demands of a growing population and economy, I am supporting a billion dollar electrical power line to the Rio Grande Valley.

I also promised more jobs. Last month, more people in Hidalgo County had a job than ever before in Texas history.

The Rio Grande Valley is brimming with promise. It's the promise of opportunity, prosperity, and hope.

Opportunity for a better job, a better education, a better quality of life.

Prosperity that isn't reserved for just the few, but that reaches the lives of every Texan in every community.

And hope. The hope that every generation will have the security of a brighter future.

It's a promise found not just in the Rio Grande Valley, but in every community across our state.

Together, we have put Texas on a remarkable path toward a brighter future. A Texas where working families can do more than just get by, they can flourish under the opportunities provided by the ninth largest economy in the world. A Texas where students don't simply graduate with a diploma. They graduate with the preparation and inspiration to take on college or a career. A Texas where every parent can rest easy knowing that their families are safe in their communities. A Texas where we protect our Constitutional rights and your individual liberties.

That is the Texas that we have worked so hard to create, but we must fight to keep it. Because some want a completely different Texas.

Where we have cut taxes, they would raise them.

Where we have created jobs, they would destroy them.

Where we have supported our law enforcement officers, they would defund them.

Where we have protected your Constitutional rights, they threaten to take them away.

Where we have promoted optimism, they stoke fearmongering.

We cannot let big government liberals redesign our state with the progressive agenda that is destroying some parts of America. We need a proven winner who will fight to secure the future of Texas. That's why today I am officially announcing that I am running for re-election as your Governor of the great state of Texas.

Ever since you elected me to be Governor, I have worked every day to deliver for the people of Texas.

Despite the unprecedented challenges that we've faced, Texas has persevered. And now, more businesses are moving here and more Texans are working here than ever.

I promised to create an environment that would spur our economy and create more jobs. And together, we have made Texas an economic juggernaut. Every year that I have been Governor, Texas has been named the best state for business. Every year that I have been Governor, Texas has ranked number one in America for the most business expansions and relocations. This past year, Texas set an all-time record with 73 businesses moving their headquarters to Texas. That is almost double the second-best year in Texas history. With those businesses come good-paying jobs for our communities and families.

And it's not just large companies. We promised to help small businesses too. And that's exactly what we achieved. Texas is now ranked the number one state in America to start a small business.

Because of our employers large and small, more Texans have jobs today than under any Governor in Texas history.

Hundreds of thousands of those jobs are in the energy sector. The sector that made America energy independent. We cannot allow promoters of the Green New Deal to destroy those high-paying jobs. One of the reasons I'm running for re-election is to secure the future of energy jobs in Texas.

And the Texas economy is more diverse than ever. Texas is the number one state in America for jobs created by Black business owners and Hispanic Women business owners.

To help all business owners that opened and operated during COVID, we promised that we would pass COVID liability protection, and we did.

We promised to expand broadband access, and we did. Whether you work from home or in an office, today's economy requires broadband access. It was particularly important to close the digital divide in rural Texas. No one has done more to achieve that goal than I have. We promised to pass a balanced budget with no new taxes, and we did.

Now I am running for Governor to cut businesses taxes even more.

Speaking of taxes, I also promised Texans that we would cut your property taxes, and we have in every legislative session that I've been Governor. Altogether, property taxes have been slashed by more than \$18 billion under my leadership.

But not enough Texans actually see the property tax relief that we've delivered. There may be reasons for that. One of them is skyrocketing appraisals. Another is that taxing authorities rack up more debt that increase property tax rates. It's time to change that. I am running for Governor to pass a Taxpayers' Bill of Rights to protect you from skyrocketing property taxes.

I'm also running to ensure that the next generation will be equipped for jobs for the future. To secure the workforce of the future, we must provide a quality education for our children. I promised to give Texas children the opportunity to high quality early education. We delivered on that promise. I am the only Governor to prioritize early education and sign it into law.

I also promised to invest more in public education, and we delivered on that promise. No Governor has devoted more resources to public education than I have. In 2019, we increased public education funding by more than \$5 billion per biennium. In 2021 we added even more.

I also promised to increase teacher pay. We delivered on that promise. Texas increased teacher pay by more than \$1.1 billion a year.

But education is about more than funding. It's about strategies that deliver results. We created math and reading academies. And we are rewarding schools based on the results they produce.

I also promised to improve high education. We delivered on that promise. We created the Governor's University Research Initiative to attract the brightest minds to our universities. And since I've been Governor, we have more than doubled the number of Tier One Research Universities in Texas. This positions Texas as a leading center for innovation, and provides our children with the quality education that secures high paying jobs.

But we know that college isn't the right path for everyone. Instead, for many, a high-skilled career is a better option, so we championed technical education. I signed a law that funds apprenticeship programs that train Texans for good paying jobs.

But at the end of the day, no government program can replace the role that parents play in the education of their children. And yet, the essential role of parents is being diminished by government itself. Parents are losing a voice when it comes to their children's education and health matters. Many parents feel powerless to do anything about it. That must end. I am running for Governor to bolster a Parents' Bill of Rights to restore parents as the primary decision-makers over their child's education and healthcare.

As we secure a brighter future for the next generation, we must also support our seniors. After years of working their way to a well-deserved retirement, our seniors shouldn't struggle to make ends meet. I'm running for re-election to create a compact with our seniors. A compact that will reduce their living costs, increase their safety, and improve access to senior programs.

Our seniors deserve safe communities. All Texans deserve safe communities. So when radical liberals wanted to defund the police, I promised we would not allow that in Texas. In Texas, we support our law enforcement officers. We delivered on our promise by passing laws that defund cities that defund the police. I'm running for re-election to ensure no radical liberal will ever defund law enforcement in Texas.

But as we all know, one of the greatest safety threats to Texas is Biden's reckless and dangerous open-border policy. I promised to do more than

any Governor ever to secure our border and protect our communities. And we responded with the strongest border security effort by any state ever. We provided \$3 billion for Texas to secure the border and added 15 laws cracking down on the heinous from of human trafficking.

I deployed thousands of National Guard troops and Department of Public Safety officers to secure the border, crack down on the smuggling of dangerous fentanyl, and arrest and jail criminals. And now, Texas is building its own border wall. I am running for re-election to ensure that Texas continues to secure our border and keep Texans safe.

It's more than just safety that's at stake in this election. Our very freedom is on the ballot. As your Governor, I fought for the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. Some running for Governor threaten your First Amendment freedom of religion. They want to end tax exempt status of churches that refuse to bow down to the woke radical agenda. I won't allow it. To the contrary, I signed a law to prevent government officials from ever closing churches and infringing on your freedom of religion.

Mark my words, freedom is on the ballot.

When college campuses threatened conservative speech, I signed a law to protect free speech on college campuses. When social media companies tried to silence conservative viewpoints, we banned Big Tech censorship. While some Texans have threatened to take your guns, I signed more than 20 laws to protect your Second Amendment rights, including making Texas a constitutional carry state and a Second Amendment Sanctuary State. I've got news for the liberals. As long as I am Governor, your right to keep and bear arms will never be infringed.

Texans face a profound question this election. Do we take a left turn that leads to more government and less freedom? A path that would destroy jobs, open our border, and endanger our communities.

Or do we maintain the course that has secured greater freedom, more jobs, and safer communities? I am running for re-election to keep Texas on the right course.

I believe Texas will be more prosperous if we rein in taxes. Our future will be brighter if we empower parents. Texas will be better if we support our

seniors. Texas will be safer if we back the blue and secure the border. And Texas will be freer if we defend the Constitution and secure your liberties.

But to win, I need your help. Can I count on you to join me in this fight to secure the future of our great state? We're building a movement. It starts right here, right now, in Hidalgo County, and will reach every corner of Texas. A movement to defend our values against a liberal agenda. A movement to uphold the promise of Texas. The promise of opportunity, prosperity, and hope for every single Texan.

Working together, we will win. Together, we will keep Texas the greatest state in the greatest country in the history of the world.

Thank you. God bless you all. And may God forever bless the great state of Texas.