



Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on June 12, 2012

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## Younger Grassroots Conservative Activists Turn Out for Texas GOP Convention

Last week, the Texas Republican Party Convention, the largest political gathering in the world, convened in Fort Worth, Texas, with an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 delegates in attendance. While the event ended Saturday without any of the physical violence that has accompanied some state conventions, still the marked differences between the establishment Republicans and the emerging grassroots conservatives were clear.

Governor Rick Perry opened the general meeting on Thursday with a speech intended to rally the crowd, and during the next two days, conventioners were treated to talks by virtually every other leading Texas official, including Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst, departing U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Senator John Cornyn, Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson, Attorney General Greg Abbott, and many others.

The newly adopted state Republican platform calls for the Lone Star State's leaders to oppose the United Nations, as well as the UN's [dangerous Agenda 21](#), described by *The New American's* Alex Newman as "a radical plan to force so-called 'sustainable development' on Americans by stealth." The platform also opposes the UN's Law of the Sea Treaty (LOST), which *The New American's* Bill Jasper has observed is one of the most dangerous and far-reaching treaties our nation has ever considered. It would "give the United Nations control and jurisdiction over the world's oceans," he said, "nearly 3/4 of the surface of our planet.... It is an effort to transfer power from the nation-state to the emerging world-state."

The platform also opposes the mandatory use of so-called electricity SmartMeters, on the grounds of health, safety, and privacy issues.

The platform supports the Keystone XL pipeline, ending the Federal Reserve, and an audit of that agency in the meantime. Another issue gaining wide popularity across the state also found its way into the platform: eliminating property taxes.

Several grassroots organizations were in attendance, not the least of which was [GrassrootsTexans](#), a network of Texans dedicated to "limited government, fiscal responsibility, personal responsibility, the rule of law and American sovereignty." The group took advantage of the event to inform attendees of its effort, encouraging a debate between Lt. Gov. Dewhurst and Texas Solicitor General Ted Cruz, both of



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whom are vying for the Senate seat being vacated by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison. GrassrootsTexans' website asks viewers to sign a letter inviting Dewhurst to commit to a series of debates with Cruz, who has already consented to such talks. Critics have maintained that Dewhurst has been reluctant to take a stand on various issues. His dismal record in the state — including hampering the efforts in the state's 2011 legislative session to oppose TSA pat-downs in Texas airports — was evidenced by the many boos from the audience during his speech. The 2014 race for Dewhurst's seat as Lieutenant Governor promises to be an important and highly contested one, because the office sets the agenda and schedule for legislation considered in the state legislative session, which convenes in January 2013. As well, the Lieutenant Governor has a lot to say about who serves as legislative committee chairmen.

The overall tone of the Texas Republican convention indicated that a battle is shaping up for 2014 and 2016 between grassroots constitutionalists and establishment Republicans. The committed presence of younger, activist members in the party who are demanding a return to a strict interpretation of the Constitution indicates that they are here to stay. And they want some changes. A great many were openly supporting Ron Paul while maintaining courtesy and cordiality throughout the convention. Interestingly, a marked lack of enthusiasm for Mitt Romney was apparent.

Several districts elected Ron Paul delegates to the national convention in Tampa. Even though the proceedings were civil, a Ron Paul delegate from a South Texas district reported experiencing immediate pressure from an official in his county to vote for Mitt Romney, and a similar report came from a West Texas district. After the convention, the Ron Paul central campaign headquarters in Texas informed supporters around the state that the names of sympathetic delegates would not be released as a precaution against any such pressure.

The Republican Party in Texas normally announces an immediate delegate count and the candidates supported by each delegate, but that information had not been released at press time, perhaps confirming either that Ron Paul delegates might be pressured to vote for Romney, or that many of the delegates are not committed, thereby possibly releasing them from being bound voters at the national convention. According to state party rules, Section 10, uncommitted delegates may vote as they choose; however, the Republican National Committee could invoke such a binding rule before or during the convention.

Once again, though the Republican Party of Texas produced a platform sure to please the strictest of conservatives, it remains to be seen if Lone Star politicians will adhere to the principles set down by the rank and file. Analysts have noted that conventions of previous years have produced similarly wholesome platforms, only to have them subsequently disregarded by elected officials. For example, Governor Perry's convention speech asserted individual and states' rights as opposed to federal overreach: "Families can govern their lives better than government.... We think an extra dose of freedom is the cure," he declared. Yet readers may remember that this is the Governor who issued an executive order in 2007 mandating that millions of 12-year-old girls in Texas be injected with the highly controversial Gardasil vaccine to protect them from sexually transmitted diseases — government overreach that was thwarted by outraged parents across the state.

Whatever the outcome of the national convention, constitutionalists in the Lone Star State are advising their fellow Texans not to abandon vigilance after the crowds go home in November. The real work of holding officials accountable to the principles in the platform and in the Constitution, they say, takes place every day from now on.



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