

Texas Swears in Christian Governor Who Pledges to Battle Obama

Republican Greg Abbott was sworn in as the new governor of Texas on Tuesday, pledging to fight the Obama administration over border security and grow the state's \$1.4 trillion a year economy.

But as he takes office in the state that is the country's largest oil and gas producer, the Texas comptrollers' office has warned of a steep drop in revenue in energy production taxes and fees, an item Abbott did not mention in his inaugural address.

"We must do more for the millions of Texans who are tired of seeing our state sovereignty and the rule of law ignored by a federal government that refuses to secure our border," he said.

Abbott, 57, a devout Christian who has served more than a decade as the Texas attorney general, is taking over from Rick Perry. Perry is the longest-serving governor in Texas history and considered a Republican candidate for the 2016 presidential election.

"Almost by definition, the governor of Texas is going to be a national actor, particularly if that person is a Republican," said Mark Jones, chair of the political science department at Rice University.

Texas, the most populous state controlled by Republicans, is seen as an incubator of conservative policies often copied by other Republican stronghold states.

Abbott has led a coalition of about two dozen states turning

to a federal court in an attempt to block the Obama administration's executive order to reduce the threat of deportation for millions of undocumented immigrants.

But as he takes office, a Federal Reserve economist this month said the Texas economy and job growth are likely to slow this year due to falling oil prices.

Perry has tried to build national political support by touting Texas job growth, saying that between December 2007 and today, the state had created 1.4 million jobs while the rest of the country had lost 400,000.

Abbott offered few details on his plans to make the state's economy grow.

He is seen by many Texans as less charismatic and more measured than Perry. Abbott has spent most of his adult life in a wheelchair after being struck by a falling tree while jogging about 30 years ago, which left him unable to walk.

Abbott said the incident has made him stronger.

"Texas is the place where the improbable becomes the possible," he said.

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