

Praying Rick Perry Contemplates Presidential Bid



*Texas Gov. Rick Perry, right, former
Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, left, and
Attorney General Greg Abbott pray at the
close of an anti-abortion fundraising
event in Dallas,
Nov. 10. (AP Photo/LM Otero)*

Aides to Texas Gov. Rick Perry said they are scrambling to determine the logistical challenges he would face in making a late entry to the fight for the Republican presidential nomination, the latest sign he is serious about joining the contest.

Among their considerations is whether Perry has enough time to raise sufficient cash, which generally requires personal contact with donors and fundraisers. Aides also have made inquiries in Iowa to assess his chances there in the first-in-the-nation caucuses.

The actions show that Perry has moved beyond thinking about joining the contest to determining whether he can build a winning campaign.

Perry, 61, would bring to the race an unusual blend of populism and establishment conservatism, marked by a combative stance against a range of Obama administration policies.

The three-term governor drew an enthusiastic response during a speech Saturday to the Republican Leadership Conference in New Orleans when he challenged GOP candidates not to shrink from social issues, such as opposition to abortion. He also touted the passage of legislation that requires voters to have valid identification.

“It saddens me when sometimes my fellow Republicans duck and cover in the face of pressure from the left,” Perry said, touching a GOP debate over how much to highlight social issues, such as abortion or gay marriage. “Our party cannot be all things to all people.” {eo}

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