

# GOP Presidential Debate: Romney and Perry Spar On Jobs

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With [jobs and the economy as the foremost concern among Americans](#), paying attention to the economic policy positions of all candidates is critical, especially as we approach the 2012 elections.

Last night's GOP Presidential Debate at the Reagan Library was ultimately a [matchup between former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney and Texas Governor Rick Perry](#). Both men touted their job-creation experience as elected state executives and contrasted one another's records and results. Let's take a look:

## Governor Rick Perry

"We put the model in place in the state of Texas. When you look at what we have done over the last decade, we created 1 million jobs." Perry added that Massachusetts "had one of the lowest job-creation rates in the country" during Romney's governorship.

"Governor Romney left the private sector, and [he did a great job of creating jobs in the private sector](#) all around the world," Perry said. "But the fact is, when he moved that experience to government, he had one of the lowest job creation rates in the country. So the fact is, while he had a good private sector record, his public sector record did not match that. As a matter of fact, we created more jobs in the last three months in Texas than he created in four years in Massachusetts."

## Governor Mitt Romney

Romney responded to Perry's assertions: "When I came in as governor, [we were in a real free-fall](#)," he said, adding that unemployment was 4.7% when he left office in 2007, which Romney presents as a demonstration of his ability to turn around a struggling economy. The [unemployment rate in Massachusetts](#) when Romney first took office in 2003 was 5.6%.

Romney also pointed out that Texas, unlike Massachusetts, is blessed with abundant natural resources, low taxes and a long-standing regulatory environment that is friendly to business, and all of which facilitated conditions which were more conducive to job creation than in Massachusetts. He highlighted that these were pre-existing realities that were not reflective of Perry's efforts.

“Those are wonderful things, but Governor Perry doesn’t believe that he created those things,” Romney said. “If he tried to say that, well, it would be like Al Gore saying he invented the Internet.”

Romney said his success in the business world has given him experience “succeeding, failing, competing around the world [and] the capacity to help get this economy going again.”

### **Perry v. Romney**

At the end of the jobs sparring between the two governors, Rick Perry took a political swing at Mitt Romney:

“Michael Dukakis created jobs three times faster than you did, Mitt,” referring to the former two-term Democratic governor of Massachusetts who was also the Democratic nominee for President in the 1988 elections against George H.W. Bush.

Romney shot back at Perry: “Well, as a matter of fact, George Bush and his predecessor created jobs at a faster rate than you did, governor.”

While both men offered their experiences as governors to promote their job-creating abilities, there was little to no discussion during the debate of actual economic policy initiatives either would promote as President. However, Mitt Romney did devise a 59-point jobs plan which he publicly presented two days before the debate. Rick Perry has yet to present an economics or jobs policy package.

### **President Obama**

Tonight [President Obama will announce his “American Jobs Act”](#) proposal before a Joint Session of Congress. Tomorrow we will provide reflections on his highly-anticipated speech.

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