

Murdock explains why he prefers Perry to Romney

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[Deroy Murdock](#)'s latest [column](#) offers a set of reasons for his support of the Texas governor in a contest against the former Massachusetts governor.

The libertarian Cato Institute's Report Card on America's Governors gives Perry straight Bs and Romney consistent Cs.

Cato praised Perry for introducing "a zero-based budget to force the state agencies to justify their continued existence and funding levels" and noted that "he has presided over moderate increases in the Texas general fund budget." Cato applauded Perry's "substantial achievement": a \$6 billion property tax cut in 2004 — including a first-year, \$1.5 billion net tax reduction. However, Cato criticized Perry for partially offsetting this tax relief with a \$1 per-pack cigarette tax hike and a gross receipts tax on business.

Cato observed that Romney's "first budget, presented under the cloud of a \$2 billion deficit, balanced the budget with some spending cuts, but a \$500 million increase in various fees was the largest component of the budget fix." Cato also saw that Romney "proposed modest increases to the budget and line-item vetoed millions of dollars each year, only to have most of those vetoes overridden." In October 2006, Cato's Stephen Slivinski predicted Romney's current migraine: "If you consider the massive costs to taxpayers that his universal health care plan will inflict once he's left office, Romney's tenure is clearly not a triumph of small-government activism."

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