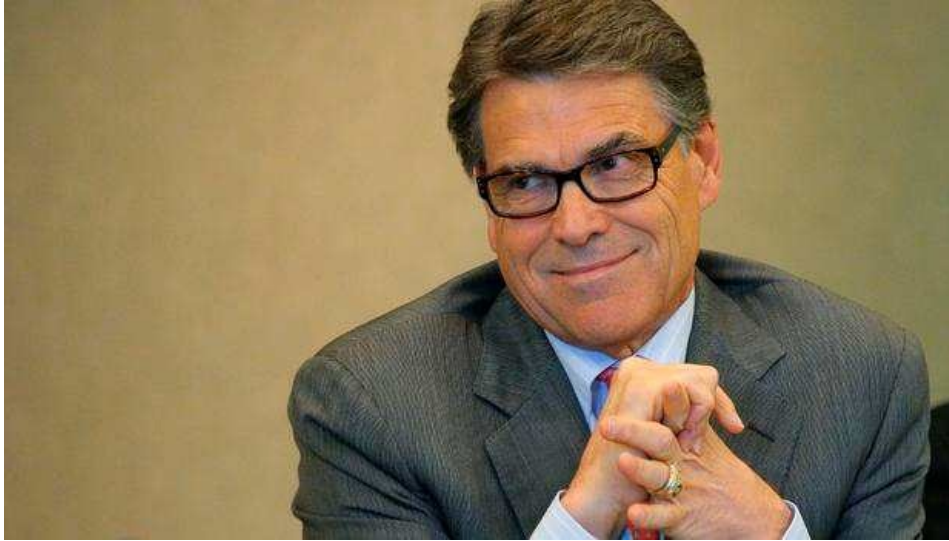


Rick Perry's Criminal Charges Dropped by Texas Court



Summary: *The former governor of Texas, Rick Perry, has had the last felony charge against him dropped by the highest Texas criminal court.*

Former Texas Gov. Rick Perry has been **cleared of charges stemming** from the abuse of power allegations. Texas's highest criminal court tossed the charges against him. One charge was dismissed while a previously dismissed charge was reiterated, leaving Perry free of any lasting charges.

Perry was indicted by the Travis County grand jury in 2014 for abusing his power in 2013 when he was in office. It was alleged that Perry pressured a district attorney in Austin to quit or state financing in the anticorruption unit of the office would be cut off. He was the first Texas governor in almost 100 years to face criminal charges.

Judge Denies Paperwork Dismissal Request in Rick Perry Case

Perry's lead defense attorney Tony Buzbee called the decision "a long time coming" and added, "I'm glad that the court finally put its foot down and put an end to this foolishness. We're happy it's over, but on the other hand, me personally, I'm disappointed in the entire system. The case should have never gotten off the ground in the first place."

As governor, Perry had the power to veto and control aspects of where money was spent. After the Travis County district attorney, Rosemary Lehmberg, was arrested for drunken driving, Perry threatened to veto \$7.5 million unless she resigned. The money was for the anti-corruption division of her office. He did veto the money by stating that he couldn't support "an office with statewide jurisdiction at a time when the person charged with ultimate responsibility of that unit has lost the public's confidence."

Rick Perry may be in legal trouble over prayer rally

Perry was accused of using her arrest to break up a public-corruption unit that the state's Republican's did not like. Lehmberg, a Democrat, was also not a favorite of many of the state's leadership. She never resigned and is still in office.

Had the charges against Perry stuck, he would have faced two felonies - one for coercing a public servant and another for abusing his official capacity. The coercion charge was dismissed in July by a state appeals court on the basis that it violated his First Amendment right to freedom of speech.

Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/25/us/texas-court-drops-criminal-case-against-rick-perry.html?_r=0

Photo: cbsnews.com