

(Washington DC) Congressman Charlie Gonzalez issued the following statement in response to Governor Perry's speech on immigration at the Republican State Convention in San Antonio:

"Make no mistake; the Republicans do not want to address immigration in any substantive fashion. This is purely political rhetoric, and the furor over immigration serves their election year agenda because Republicans want to play on the fears of Americans. So, they continue to whip up the anxieties of Americans and play to their base, which favors unrealistic, unpractical enforcement only legislation.

And, once people are afraid, you can lead them where you want. So, Republicans are hoping that fears about illegal immigration will be the way to victory this fall. They keep pushing this issue because their policies are not solving the day-to-day problems Texans have. Yet, if they sound the alarm often enough and arouse people's fears, then voters will forget the record of Republicans when they enter the polling booth in November.

By contrast, my friend Chris Bell is interested in discussing the problems of Texans and how to solve those problems. The Texas Republican Party is divided this year, and if Texans want a leader, they should unite behind Chris Bell. I worked with Chris in the US House of Representatives and know him as a man of integrity, hard work and commitment.

No one is arguing that we shouldn't secure our borders. Of course we should but let's be realistic about doing so. Militarizing our southern border will not achieve this goal. Moreover, we need a solution for the comprehensive legislation that addresses the many facets of this issue. We need to increase employer sanctions, make it harder to counterfeit IDs, ramp up security on the border and admit that deporting 12 million people is not realistic.

At the end of the day, Republicans do not want a meaningful policy-oriented dialogue on immigration because it does not serve their political ends."