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Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback to attend Texas prayer rally 'on behalf of our troubled nation'

Gov. Sam Brownback plans to attend a daylong Christian rally of prayer and fasting in Houston that organizers say is aimed at helping the country during its "historic crisis."

Brownback accepted an invitation to the Aug. 6 event at Reliant Stadium from Texas Gov. Rick Perry, according to Brownback's spokeswoman Sherriene Jones-Sontag. Both Perry and Brownback are Republicans.

Jones-Sontag said Brownback will pay his own expenses.

Perry, who has reportedly been considering a presidential run, said on the event's website, "Right now, America is in crisis: we have been besieged by financial debt, terrorism, and a multitude of natural disasters. As a nation, we must come together and call upon Jesus to guide us through unprecedented struggles, and thank Him for the blessings of freedom we so richly enjoy."

The organizer of the event, which is called The Response, is the American Family Association. On its website, the AFA states its mission "is to inform, equip, and activate individuals to strengthen the moral foundations of American culture, and give aid to the church here and abroad in its task of fulfilling the Great Commission."

The event website described the United States as in a "historic crisis" and "has not honored God." The event is free and open to the public but requires registration, which can be found at registration.afa.net. Fasting is recommended, but there will be some food vendors and water for sale.

In 2009, while serving in the U.S. Senate, Brownback was one of the speakers on a live video "PrayerCast" to oppose health care reform that was then being debated in Congress. That event was sponsored by the Family Research Council.

Perry's invitation to governors across the country to attend the event raised concerns with the Interfaith Alliance, which describes itself as an organization that promotes policies that protect religion and democracy.

"Gov. Perry has every right to pray or fast in private or with others," said Interfaith Alliance President Dr. C. Welton Gaddy. "However, when he uses his public office in any way to promote a sectarian event, he has crossed a line that the framers of our Constitution did not want crossed for the good of both religion and government," he said.

By Scott Rothschild

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