



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on October 22, 2011

Bachmann Caught Unaware as N.H. Staff Quits

"The New Hampshire team has quit", Jeff Chidester, the former New Hampshire Bachmann campaign director, told the *Union Leader*. "We'll issue a joint statement as to why." Without giving the details, Chidester, a conservative activist and radio talk-show host, said he and at least three other staff members — Tom Lucasz, Nicole Yurek and Caroline Gigler — have left out of frustration with the national campaign and not with the candidate herself. He said he could not confirm that Matt LeDuc has also resigned, as had been reported. The departed staffers will likely be looking to land positions with rival campaigns. Gigler has already signed on with the New Hampshire campaign of Texas Governor Rick Perry and will start work Monday as a New Hampshire field representative.



But the news apparently came as a surprise to Bachmann, who was caught off guard by the latest development in her faltering campaign when she heard of it in a newscast while campaigning in Iowa. The Minnesota Congresswoman called a radio talk show to deny the report.

"This is a shocking story to me," [Bachmann said](#) on the air during a call-in to Radio Iowa. "I don't know where that came from. We have called staff in New Hampshire to find out where that came from and the staff has said it isn't true, so I don't know if this is just a bad story that's being fed by a different candidate or campaign. I have no idea where that came from, but we've made calls and it's certainly not true."

Bachmann went on to describe the report as a "rumor" and called it "reprehensible" for the media to report it without checking with her campaign. However, [CBS News reported](#) Friday that Chidester told a CBS New Jersey affiliate that he had resigned last week and had so informed the national campaign.

"That information was conveyed to the people that are closest to Michele," Chidester wrote in an email to CBS/NJ "If that information was not shared, that is unfortunate."

Yet Keith Nahigian, Bachmann's national campaign manager, said late Friday, "We have not been notified that anyone is leaving the campaign. We look forward to spending more time in the Granite State between now and the primary."

"I'm sorry the national team is confused," said Chidester. "They shouldn't be."

Apparently, lack of communication and ongoing friction between the national and state campaign organizations is what led to the defections. The state organization has been frustrated by the infrequency of Bachmann's visits to the state since she formally declared her candidacy during a debate



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among GOP hopefuls at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire, in June. An unidentified Republican source, described as “close to the campaign,” told *Union Leader* reporter John DiStaso the New Hampshire staff “received nothing from the national campaign, no logistical support whatsoever.” Bachmann's recent visit to the state, leading up to a debate at Dartmouth College in Hanover, was plagued by a lack of communication from the national staff to the state campaign, said the source, who also cited “pay infrequency” as a reason for dissatisfaction among members of the state team.

While New Hampshire holds the first presidential primary elections every four years, Iowa's caucuses are held a week before the New Hampshire voting and Bachmann, a native of the Hawkeye State and member of Congress from neighboring Minnesota, has concentrated her efforts there. While her announcement of her candidacy during the June debate in New Hampshire got her newsprint and air time the following day, her campaign has not caught on in the Granite State, where former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney appears to be the strong frontrunner. Bachmann's campaign appears to have peaked in mid-August when she won the Ames Straw Poll in Iowa, barely edging out Texas Congressman Ron Paul and knocking fellow Minnesotan and former governor Tim Pawlenty out of the race.

Since then Bachmann has turned in solid performances in a series of candidate debates, but has been generally overlooked in post-debate coverage, as media attention has focused on the rivalry between Romney and Perry and the sudden popularity of Georgia businessman Herman Cain.

Iowa, rather than New Hampshire, remains the “main focus” of Bachmann's presidential bid, her campaign manager acknowledged. “At this time, our main focus is Iowa and we are building on our efforts there,” Nahigian told the *Union Leader*. “Michele will spend the majority of her time in Iowa, doing what she does better than all the other candidates — retail politics — leading up to the all-important caucuses.”

Photo: Rep. Michele Bachmann



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