



GOP Presidential Candidate Michele Bachmann

Along the way she has become a favorite with the Tea Party movement and is founder of the congressional Tea Party Caucus. A *Des Moines Register* poll at the end of June showed her in a virtual tie with early frontrunner Mitt Romney in Iowa, where caucus voters will provide the first test for presidential contenders in 2012. She has been among the most visible and vocal opponents of both the Troubled Asset Relief Program (the Wall Street bailout) that Congress passed in 2008 and the following year's rescue of the auto industry that left the federal government the principal shareholder of General Motors. She has introduced legislation to repeal the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, described by the president of the American Bankers Association as a "tsunami of new rules and restrictions for traditional banks that had nothing to do with causing the financial crisis in the first place." Above all, she seeks the repeal of the healthcare reform bill that Barack Obama and a Democratic Congress enacted last year, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.



"We must remember that ObamaCare is the largest spending and entitlement program in our nation's history," she said during the debate over the "cut, cap and balance" bill passed by the House this summer. "That means, at a time when we can least afford it, President Obama added to our spending problem by the trillions. Without its repeal, we cannot have real economic reform." During the candidates' debate in New Hampshire on June 13, Bachmann said that what is needed is "the mother of all repeal bills" to reduce the "job-killing" effects of overregulation. "And I would begin with the EPA," she said, "because there is no other agency like the EPA. It should really be renamed the job-killing organization of America."

In January 2010, she wrote in a Townhall.com blog that the \$20 billion of the "economic stimulus" program that had been spent to that point had had no effect on unemployment levels. "An Associated Press analysis of stimulus spending found that it didn't matter if a lot of money was spent on highways or none at all: Local unemployment rates rose and fell regardless." Yet while Bachmann has been a fierce and persistent critic of "Washington's spending addiction," she has, like other members of Congress, shown that the home district is not the favorite place to practice fiscal conservatism. In the previous year she had sent several letters to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood seeking stimulus



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funding for transportation projects in her district through Transportation Investment-Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants. And in her letter in support of a \$300 million request for a new bridge to “dramatically improve accessibility to the downtown Stillwater retail district,” Bachmann cited a Minnesota Department of Transportation estimate that the project would create “a total of 2,970 jobs each year after the project is completed.” In a statement to the *Minnesota Post*, Bachmann defended the requests: “I continue to oppose the so-called stimulus package because it has been a failure. It has failed at job creation, has wasted millions on everything from “smoking cessation activities” to “tax breaks for Hollywood movie producers” and has piled a massive amount of debt on our children and grandchildren. It is my obligation as a member of Congress to ensure stimulus dollars are spent on the most worthy projects. I did just that when I supported applications for the TIGER grant program.”

A native of Waterloo, Iowa, Bachmann, 55, grew up in Minnesota. She spent a summer working on a kibbutz, or communal farm, in Israel on a mission sponsored by Young Life, a Christian ministry. Today Bachmann is a member of Christians United for Israel and has visited the nation several times during her five years in Congress. Speaking at a Republican Jewish Coalition event in Los Angeles last year, Bachmann said, “I am convinced in my heart and in my mind that if the United States fails to stand with Israel, that is the end of the United States.” She went on to say: “We have to show that we are inextricably entwined, that as a nation we have been blessed because of our relationship with Israel, and if we reject Israel, then there is a curse that comes into play.”

Bachmann is a graduate of Winona (Minnesota) State University. She holds a law degree from Oral Roberts University and a Master of Laws in tax law from William and Mary, and worked for five years as an attorney for the IRS. The Bachmanns have five children, now ages 17 to 29, and have provided a temporary home to a large number of foster children over the years.

She became well known for her political activism, most notably on pro-life issues. She opposed the use of public funds for construction of a county morgue at a St. Paul hospital where abortions were performed. She was among the founders of the North Heights Charter School in her hometown of Stillwater, a suburb of St. Paul, but left the board after some parents complained she was bringing Christian teaching into the curriculum. She became involved in education issues and opposed Minnesota’s school-to-work program, arguing that it overemphasized the acquisition of workplace skills at the expense of traditional academic studies. “She’s articulate, attractive and speaks passionately,” former school board member Mary Ceconni told the Minneapolis publication *City Pages* in 2006. “Actually, she is ferocious.”

A year after losing an election for the school board, Bachmann defeated nine-term incumbent Gary Laidig for the Republican nomination for state Senate. She won the general election and was reelected twice before running for Congress in 2006. She tried to get a constitutional amendment on the ballot to prohibit Minnesota from recognizing same-sex “marriage” (it still does not), but the proposal eventually died in a Senate committee.

Now in her third congressional term, Bachmann has continued to promote a pro-life, pro-family agenda and has voted consistently for a smaller, less intrusive federal government, operating within the bounds of constitutionally delegated authority. Her voting record on key issues scored in this magazine’s first “Freedom Index” for the new Congress shows her with a 90-percent ranking, having voted “right” on nine out of 10 issues, ranging from repealing ObamaCare to defunding Planned Parenthood to ending American military action in Libya. The one exception was her vote to extend provisions of the PATRIOT



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Act that authorize federal authorities to listen to suspects' telephone conversations without specifying what they're looking for and to seize personal papers, records, and "any tangible thing" that may be relevant to an investigation. (Over her congressional career, her cumulative Freedom Index score is 81 percent.)

While she voted for the Libyan withdrawal, Bachmann has supported the ongoing war in Iraq, arguing in a debate over President Bush's troop surge in 2007 that the "radical Islamists" can only defeat us "if they crumple the resolve of America to fight and to win this war." In June of this year, Bachmann argued against the drawdown of the surge troops in Afghanistan, even though this year's reduction would still leave more U.S. forces there than when Obama came into office.

Last November Bachmann spoke at a symposium hosted by Freedom Watch, a lobbying group that supported the Iraq War and now calls for "western intervention to remove this dangerous Islamic regime" in Iran. While Bachmann did not explicitly call for military action against Iran, she spoke of "the need to do more than the simple engagement strategy of talking." In a guest blog on the Heritage Foundation website this year, Bachmann argued against any reductions in the overall defense budget.



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