



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on April 14, 2011

Pawlenty: Im Running for President! Soon

When former Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty (pictured) was being interviewed on CNN last week, he was asked if he would accept the position as Donald Trump's running mate for President, he responded: "I'm running for President. I'm not putting my hat in the ring rhetorically or ultimately for vice president so I'm focused on running for president." Host Piers Morgan jumped on his statement immediately:



Governor, unless I was mistaken you just said you were running for President. Can we take that as a formal announcement?

Pawlenty: Well, I've got an exploratory committee up and running and we'll have a final or full announcement in the coming weeks here, it won't be much longer, but everything is headed in that direction.

Following his announcement that he wasn't making an official announcement as a candidate for the Presidency, Pawlenty then announced that he [just hired](#) two establishment Republican politicos to help him with his presidential exploratory committee: Nick Ayers, former Executive Director of the Republican Governors Association, and Jon Seaton, an advisor to John McCain during his presidential campaign in 2008, and a former political advisor to the George Bush administration. Pawlenty gushed about his good fortune in snagging Seaton:

Jon is one of the Republican Party's top political organizers. Jon has the skills, energy and experience to organize the grassroots army that can't wait to defeat President Obama. With Jon's help, we're going to unite all parts of the conservative movement around an optimistic agenda to take back our country.

Uniting "all parts of the conservative movement" is going to be a neat trick indeed for Pawlenty, whose support for various major issues makes him especially hard to pin down. For example, when he was running for Governor in 2002, Pawlenty [promised not to raise taxes](#) to balance the state's out-of-balance budget. "No new taxes" was his campaign pledge and, indeed, during his first term as Governor, Pawlenty managed to close the \$4.3 billion deficit, primarily through bookkeeping "adjustments" which reflected lower rates of growth in various state services such as transportation, social services, and welfare. In other words, there were no actual cuts in the budget, just reductions in the rate of growth of existing government services.

In his second term he faced a \$2.7 billion deficit, and, once again was able to close that deficit, this time through shifting payments and using "[one time](#) money." As noted by Minnesota Public Radio ([MPR](#)) at the time, "Th[is] action solved the budget problem over the short-term but didn't fix it over the long term." For 2011, Minnesota faces a \$4.4 billion shortfall, according to the state Department of Management and Budget, and the Minnesota State Economist, Tom Stinson, isn't happy about it: "We are unlikely, very unlikely, to grow our way out of the problem. [It] is more than just an accounting problem [this time]."



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Pawlenty downplayed Stinson's concerns, voiced in late 2009:

If the next governor is willing to stand up...and hold government spending [to] the rate of growth in the private sector...it's a very manageable number.

In summary, as Governor, Pawlenty managed to close huge deficits mainly through accounting tricks and a one-time windfall, but never addressed the hard issue of cutting government spending. And then, as he was preparing to leave office, he encouraged the new Governor to have some backbone and do the cutting that Pawlenty promised but never delivered.

While in office, Pawlenty had several opportunities really to cut government spending, but passed on them. For instance, he worked hard to support public funding (read: tax increases) for the Minnesota Twins baseball stadium in Minneapolis. The bill that was passed by the legislature called for an increased county sales tax to pay for it, but neatly avoided having the taxpayers vote on the matter. According to [Wikipedia](#), "the majority of Hennepin County commissioners did not feel a referendum was necessary to approve the sales tax because of the delay it would cause." In plain English, they knew voters wouldn't approve, so they bypassed them altogether.

Pawlenty loved to spend government money despite his pledges to rein in government spending. In June of 2006, he signed a \$1 billion public works bill that included funding for the Northstar Commuter rail line, and expansion of the Faribault prison, a new science building and facilities at the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State University.

Pawlenty also is a "greenie." In November, 2008, he [announced](#) a wondrous variety of government credits for those unwilling to invest in "green jobs" with their own money. They included:

- New tax-free incentives through a "Green JOBZ" program
- A new Job Growth Investment Tax Credit target to green jobs
- A new Small Business Investment Tax Credit for new green jobs
- [Financial] incentives to expand biomethane, solar and other renewable energy projects

Those familiar with Pawlenty's efforts point out that he is simply following the mandates of [ICLEI](#) which derive from Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations' Earth Summit, which called for "changing the very infrastructure of the nation, away from private ownership and control of property to nothing short of central planning of the entire economy," according to Tom DeWeese of the [American Policy Center](#).

Even [OnTheIssues.org](#) had trouble placing Pawlenty on the political spectrum. After reviewing his position statements on numerous issues over the years, they have decided to call him a "Populist-Leaning Conservative." What's missing, unfortunately, is any semblance of belief by Pawlenty in limited government, support for the Constitution of the United States, or free markets. In other words, Pawlenty is just another RINO.



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