



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on December 17, 2009

Pawlenty in NH Rips Potomac 'Ponzi Scheme'

Accusing Democrats in Washington of running "a Ponzi scheme on the Potomac," Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty made his first foray into New Hampshire since he campaigned for the McCain-Palin ticket in 2008, speaking Wednesday night at a fundraiser for Republican state Senate candidates in Concord.



Sounding traditional conservative themes, the youthful (at 49) governor, considered a likely contender for the GOP presidential nomination in 2012, warned of growing government control over the shrinking private sector of the economy and the dangers of a dramatically rising national debt. According to the *Concord Monitor*, about 150 Republicans attended the \$50-a-head fundraiser at the Grappone Center, some of whom paid \$500 to attend an earlier reception with the Gopher State governor.

The country is in a precarious position, Pawlenty warned, if we must continue to depend on China and other nations to continue to buy our bonds so that we can continue to meet our financial obligations.

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"If they don't, if others don't, we can't pay our bills, and that's not the United States of America that we want," he said. "The U.S. is not a beggar nation." Pawlenty said Congress should cut funding of the Troubled Assets Relief Program and the economic stimulus package and get rid of earmarks for projects congressmen seek for their districts and states. He favors a balanced budget requirement and a line item veto for the President, something that the U.S. Supreme Court found unconstitutional in the 1990's. The tax cuts passed during the administration of President George W. Bush should be made permanent, he said.

On the burning issue of the day, Pawlenty said healthcare reform could be achieved with less federal intervention than would be the case under the Democratic plan passed by the House and now before the Senate. He favors giving families "good information" and financial incentives "to the extent we can afford it" to maximize opportunities for individuals and families to make their own health care choices. In his visit to the state with the first-in-the-nation presidential primary, Pawlenty made political hay with the Granite State's "Live Free or Die" motto, suggesting the Democrats' motto should be "Grow Government and Stagnate."

Last month Pawlenty was in Iowa, the state that traditionally holds its presidential caucuses eight days before the New Hampshire primary. In New Hampshire on Wednesday, he once again did not say whether he intended to run for President in 2012. With the final year of his second term approaching, Pawlenty has announced he will not seek reelection in 2010 and in October he established the Freedom



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First political action committee to raise money for Republican candidates across the country in next year's elections.

"After that we'll see," the St. Paul native told the New Hampshire *Union Leader* on Wednesday. "I don't know what I'm going to be doing after 2010. I may stay in public service or not, I don't know."

A lawyer, businessman and former state legislator, Pawlenty ran for governor in 2002, defeating in a primary businessman Brian Sullivan, the favored candidate of the state's Republican leadership. In a three-way race in the general election, Pawlenty defeated state Senator Roger Moe, the candidate of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor-Party and former Democratic Congressman Tim Penny, running as the candidate of the Independence Party. He ran on conservative themes and was reelected in 2006, despite criticism from conservatives of his support of funding bills for stadiums for the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Twins major league baseball team. The state is currently facing a \$1.2 billion budget and Pawlenty has so far opposed raising taxes to fund a proposed \$870 million stadium for the NFL's Minnesota Vikings, though he continues to meet frequently with Vikings owner Zygi Wilf, according to the *Star-Tribune* of Minneapolis.

Pawlenty was said to be on John McCain's "short list" of possible running mates last year, right up until the Arizona Senator settled on his choice of Alaska Governor Sarah Palin. Pawlenty told the *Union Leader* on Wednesday's stop that the activists in the tea party demonstrations against bigger government and a federal takeover of healthcare "really have put their finger on something and they reflect something that is a raw nerve in the country. People are mad, and they should be, about the out of control, reckless, irresponsible federal spending and the non-stop march toward government intervention." In the interview with the statewide daily, Pawlenty advocated keeping taxes low, improving schools and making healthcare and college education more affordable, the paper reported.

"There are solutions to that that Republicans and conservatives should be addressing, not by having the government take everything over but by using our principles and values," he said.

But conservative — and constitutional — principals and values would require the federal government to stay out of areas in which the Constitution gives it no authority, including schools, healthcare and college education. Perhaps Republican primary voters will learn more of the specifics of Tim Pawlenty's conservatism in the next couple of years if the Minnesota governor does in fact pursue his party's 2012 presidential nomination.

Photo of Gov. Tim Pawlenty: AP Images



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