



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 4, 2010

Pawlenty of What for President?

Republicans are not inclined to run debutantes for President. No Obama, please. Republicans love retreads. I almost believe that if Adlai Stevenson, twice the Democratic nominee for President, had turned Republican before he died, he might have had a chance at being the GOP nominee. Republicans like them ripe and experienced.

A failed candidacy and forced retirement eight years earlier is a nice addition to the candidate's resume. Maturity. Longevity. Durability. These are Republican campaign strengths.



So don't get carried away about Sara Palin — not yet anyway. Sarah is not nearly old enough or experienced enough to head the ticket — though she may be perfect for another ride in the shotgun seat as VP candidate for a second time. Romney and Huckabee have each been around long enough, but just barely. McCain is finally on the scrap heap in the retirement home called the U.S. Senate. Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindall is still too young and inexperienced and made a belly flop of a first impression when he gave the Republican response to the State of the Union address a year or two ago.

But Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota seems determined to give it a try and has visited Iowa, by some counts, five times since the last presidential election. But why not? It's right next door to Minnesota and Iowa is not averse to courting newcomers to presidential politics. In 2008, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee won the Iowa caucuses.

Chances are those of us who live in New Hampshire will not see much of either Huckabee or Pawlenty as 2012 draws near. The cornfields of Iowa are fertile grounds for them and for former Alaska Governor and 2008 Republican candidate for Vice President Sarah Palin. They may leave New Hampshire to former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, who has a summer home in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, though that didn't help him much in '08 when he finished well behind John McCain in the Granite State. Geography isn't what it used to be.

But does Pawlenty have what it takes to win the GOP nod? Assuming the Republicans are willing to break with tradition and nominate someone who is not yet old enough to be on Social Security, Pawlenty may have the "right stuff." A fiscal conservative (aren't they all, though?) who is pro-life, against same-sex marriage, for family values, and supports righteous Republican wars against countries that haven't attacked us but might start thinking about it if we don't attack them first. A certifiable hawk, Pawlenty has been to Afghanistan and has criticized the Obama administration for scrapping plans for anti-missile installations in Poland and the Czech Republic. "We need to make sure there is no confusion about where we stand, what we stand for and who we stand with," Pawlenty said. If the Minnesota Governor once had misgivings about "nation building" around the world, he probably got over it about the same time George W. Bush did. Wars 'R' Us, nation building to follow.



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While still a long shot for the top spot, Pawlenty might be good for the VP slot, assuming Palin doesn't want a rerun of 2008, with a sequel to *Going Rogue* to follow. And if the party nominates either Romney or Gingrich, Pawlenty would offer a geographical balance, since he is from the Midwest. So would Palin, hailing from the Pacific Northwest, between Canada and Russia, where the wolves and the grizzly bears play.

I would put the early money on Gingrich. He can be the policy wonk, while Palin talks the language of the common people: "So how's all that hopey changey stuff workin' out for ya?"

Photo of Tim Pawlenty: AP Images



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