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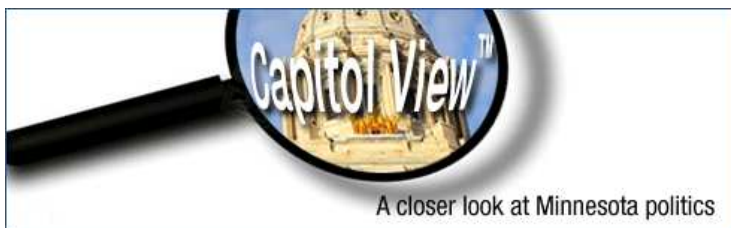
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Mr. Pawlenty goes to Washington

Posted at 6:03 PM on May 25, 2011 by Brett Neely ([0 Comments](#))
Filed under: [2012](#), [Pawlenty travel](#), [Tim Pawlenty](#)

WASHINGTON - Former Gov. Tim Pawlenty's kicked off his presidential campaign by traveling to Iowa on Monday to tell farmers that he would end ethanol subsidies. On Tuesday, he went to Florida to tell seniors he wasn't afraid to make changes to Social Security and Medicare.

That theme continued on Wednesday, when Pawlenty traveled to Washington, DC to announce that there should be fewer federal workers and that they should be paid less.

"We can't have federal employees getting a better deal than the people paying the bill - and that's the taxpayer," Pawlenty said.

Before a subdued crowd at the libertarian Cato Institute, Pawlenty cast his record as governor of Minnesota as one filled with the kind of "hard" decisions he would also make as president.

When pressed for specifics by both the audience and reporters about whether he supported House Budget Chairman Paul Ryan's (R-WI) plan to end the current Medicare single payer insurance system and replace it with vouchers for private medical insurance, Pawlenty demurred from answering the question directly.

"I think in general, the direction of it is positive, but I'm going to have my own plan, and so we're going to have some differences from his plan," Pawlenty said, promising to release more details soon.

Although Pawlenty pledged to rein in government spending, he also said the Pentagon should remain off limits to budget cuts, saying, "The rate of growth can be slowed down, but it shouldn't shrink in absolute terms."

When asked a question about foreign policy, Pawlenty jumped at the chance to say he had had "an unusual amount of international experience" for a former governor and then rattled off a long list of countries and regions he had traveled to.

In addition to the speech, Pawlenty also attended a fundraiser co-hosted by his two closest congressional allies, fellow Minnesota Republicans John Kline and Erik Paulsen.

Scheduling conflicts prevented both from attending but in an interview with MPR News earlier this week, Paulsen said many members of Congress were hoping to learn more about Pawlenty while he's in the capital.

"Right now as they're focused on Tim Pawlenty running for president officially," Paulsen said, "Now they're really paying attention and they want to meet him."

Pawlenty continues his campaign this week with stops in New Hampshire on Thursday and in New York on Friday, where he promised to tell Wall Street, "the carve-outs, the bail-outs, the subsidies, the handouts, are over for you as well."

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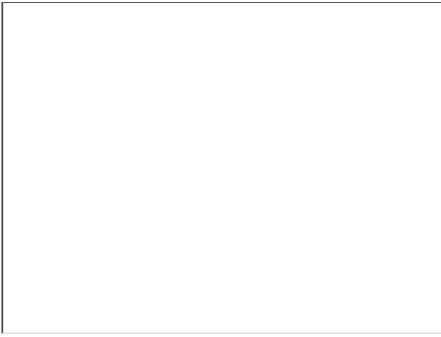
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