

Tim Pawlenty to Officially Announce for President

By Elspeth Reeve May 20, 2011

Tim Pawlenty will announce he's running for president at a town hall in Des Moines, Iowa, Monday, the Associated Press reports. The former Minnesota governor is positioning himself as the best alternative to Mitt Romney. He was the only establishment candidate to show up at the first Republican primary debate in South Carolina earlier this month, but still ranks below Romney, Sarah Palin, and Newt Gingrich in polls.

Iowa holds the first presidential primary contests, and "a strong finish in Iowa is crucial for Pawlenty's hopes of winning the Republican presidential nomination," CNN reports. Pawlenty is an evangelical Christian, and social conservatives are a key segment of GOP primary voters in Iowa. Pawlenty's Des Moines stop is part of a campaign tour on which he'll be visiting New Hampshire, New York, a Facebook townhall in Florida, and the Cato Institute in Washington.