

# FactChecking Pawlenty

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We are periodically taking a look at past claims from the 2012 presidential candidates. Former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty released a [web video](#), announcing that he was running for president, and he'll kick off his campaign in Iowa. In recent months, we have found him straying from the facts.

- In a January interview on "Fox News Sunday," Pawlenty [said](#) that he "never did sign a bill relating to cap and trade" while governor of Minnesota. But that's false. He signed a 2007 bill requiring a task force to come up with recommendations on how Minnesota could institute cap and trade. Plus, Pawlenty joined other Midwestern governors in signing a compact to "develop a market-based and multi-sector cap-and-trade mechanism." Pawlenty also claimed that "I've opposed cap and trade." But that's only been the case since 2009, when Pawlenty wrote a letter to his state's congressional delegation saying that a federal cap-and-trade bill was "overly bureaucratic, misguided."
- Pawlenty also [changed his view of government bailouts](#), saying in January: "I don't think the government should bail out Wall Street or the mortgage industry or for that matter any other industry." But in 2008 at a National Press Club luncheon, he said that in an "ideal marketplace" entities would be allowed to fail. "But if you allow those entities to fail, the consequences are so severe for innocent bystanders, namely average Americans who rely on the markets, rely on those mortgages, you know, the consequences are too severe. ... [T]hey are too big, the consequences are too severe for innocent bystanders to allow them to fail."
- He [was well off the mark](#) when he said in a December op-ed for the *Wall Street Journal* that "local, state and federal governments added 590,000" jobs since January 2008, while private sector employment had declined by millions. The private sector job loss, as of Pawlenty's writing, was 7.3 million, but public sector jobs had also gone down — not up, as Pawlenty claimed. Figures on government employment showed a loss of 118,000 jobs. It turns out Pawlenty got his information from a several months' old blog post.
- Pawlenty also repeated a popular and misleading conservative talking point when he said that "[f]ederal employees receive an average of \$123,049 annually in pay and benefits, twice the average of the private sector," also in that op-ed. The figures came from *USA Today* and the Cato Institute, but we [found](#) that the government pay and benefits included retiree health and life insurance benefits, and money Congress uses to cover "unfunded liabilities" for retirees. Also, the average federal worker has more education and experience than the average private sector worker, and these compensation figures fail to take that into account.