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[Home](#) > [Blogs](#) > [Jake Gibson's blog](#) > Pawlenty Takes "Truth Tour" to DC

# Pawlenty Takes "Truth Tour" to DC

By *Jake Gibson*

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Former Minnesota Gov. [Tim Pawlenty](#) <sup>[1]</sup> took his "time to tell the truth" tour to Washington Wednesday afternoon, giving a speech at the libertarian leaning CATO institute, where he refused to endorse or reject the budget proposed by fellow Republican and House Budget Committee Chairman [Paul Ryan](#) <sup>[2]</sup> of Wisconsin. "Our proposal is going to have similarities overall to the Ryan roadmap, but our [Medicare](#) <sup>[3]</sup> plan will be somewhat different."

Pawlenty has spent this opening week of his presidential campaign telling anyone who will listen what he calls, the "tough truths" that they may not want to hear.

First he went to Iowa, where he officially announced his campaign Monday and told all-important caucus voters government ethanol subsidies had to be phased out. Tuesday he was in Florida, arguably the most important swing state in the country, telling seniors the retirement age would have to be gradually raised and that the wealthy should not receive cost of living adjustments.

Wednesday the presidential hopeful used the nation's capitol as a backdrop to take on the issue of public servants. "We can't have government employees getting a better deal than the people who are paying the bill and that's the taxpayers and we need to bring the pay and benefits in line with the private sector and they're not in line," said Pawlenty. "We'll be calling for an audit for the total value of compensation, not just based on salary but the total compensation value and then compare that to the private sector and make sure that the federal government employee benefits and salaries do not go up until they're in alignment with the private sector."

When asked if there were any specific federal agencies he would consider eliminating entirely, Pawlenty demurred on specifics but did point to the housing giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. "We'll have a budget proposal that will be out shortly but you can assume it will include reduction or elimination of a number of things one of which will be Fannie and Freddy. I know those aren't federal agencies per se, but they're essentially wholly owned subsidiaries of the federal government."

Pawlenty has said repeatedly over the past few days there should be no "sacred cows." However, he does seem to draw a line at defense spending. "We need to make sure that we maintain it as a priority... the base budget of the United States military, in my view, shouldn't shrink," Pawlenty said.

While the CATO institute recently gave Pawlenty an A grade for his handling of the Minnesota state economy, his Democratic enemies in the state claim his final budget will end up in the red. Team Pawlenty seems to sense that could prove to be a powerful line of attack, and he defends himself vociferously. "Keep in mind, I had eight years as governor, two-year budgets and

balanced every one of them and my last one is going to end this summer in the black, and the next one assumes an over 20 percent projected spending increase which I would have never allowed as governor. They wouldn't have a deficit if I was still there," he argues.

Next stop for Pawlenty's marathon of tough talk will be New York City. He plans to head to Wall Street to tell the financial sector it is time for an end to bailouts and cronyism. Pawlenty will wrap up the week in New Hampshire, home of the nation's first presidential primary election.

2012 Election

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**Links:**

[1] [http://www.foxnews.com/topics/politics/tim-pawlenty.htm#r\\_src=ramp](http://www.foxnews.com/topics/politics/tim-pawlenty.htm#r_src=ramp)

[2] [http://www.foxnews.com/topics/politics/rep.-paul-ryan.htm#r\\_src=ramp](http://www.foxnews.com/topics/politics/rep.-paul-ryan.htm#r_src=ramp)

[3] [http://www.foxnews.com/topics/health/healthy-aging/medicare.htm#r\\_src=ramp](http://www.foxnews.com/topics/health/healthy-aging/medicare.htm#r_src=ramp)