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### Democrats go after Pawlenty's credibility to bash the budget

By Michael O'Brien - 02/01/10 12:09 PM ET

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Democrats in Washington went after Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R) on Monday, saying the 2012 hopeful lacks credibility on fiscal issues.

The Democratic National Committee (DNC) seized on an op-ed written by Pawlenty in which he reiterated a claim that the government's budget, the latest iteration of which was released this morning, resembles a "Ponzi scheme."

The DNC pointed to Pawlenty's record as governor, though, saying he's been far from the model of fiscal discipline.



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"After having increased spending as Governor, Tim Pawlenty should be worried about turning off his spigot of naked hypocrisy and blatant right-wing pandering before he washes away what little credibility he has left," said DNC spokesman Hari Sevugan.

Among other things in Pawlenty's record, the DNC pointed to deficits projected in out years after Pawlenty leaves office in 2013, as well as the libertarian Cato Institute's "C" grade in its 2006 report card on governors' fiscal records.

"On a day when President Obama proposes more unsustainable deficit spending, it's beyond hypocritical for the DNC to attack a governor who has successfully balanced his state's budget every year without raising taxes," said Alex Conant, a spokesman for Pawlenty's Freedom First PAC. "While President Obama talks a lot about fiscal responsibility, Governor Pawlenty's actually cut spending."

(Pawlenty's camp also notes that Cato gave the governor a more favorable rating for recent years' actions.)

The DNC's jab toward the Minnesota Republican comes as President Barack

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Obama released a \$3.8 trillion budget for 2010, which is projected to leave a \$1.27 deficit -- a likely topic of many GOP attacks.

Among those critics of the president's budget are a bevy of potential Republican candidates for president in 2012, including Pawlenty.

*This post was updated at 12:32 p.m.*

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