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Pawlenty gets high marks from libertarian group

By Jeremy Herb

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Gov. Tim Pawlenty received an “A” grade from the libertarian Cato Institute for opposing tax increases and being a “relatively frugal budgeter,” earning him higher marks than other Republican governors who are potential presidential candidates in 2012.

Cato’s report, “[Fiscal Policy Report Card on America’s Governors](#),” named Pawlenty as one of four governors who received an “A.”

That put him ahead of Gov. Mitch Daniels of Indiana, who received a “B,” and Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi, who got a “C” — two governors who have hinted at a 2012 presidential run.

According to the libertarian think tank’s website: “Governors who have cut taxes and spending the most receive the highest grades, while those who have increased taxes and spending the most receive the lowest grades.”

The report said that Pawlenty “has proposed cutting the state’s high and uncompetitive corporate franchise tax, and he has repeatedly vetoed giant tax-hike packages passed by the legislature, including increases to gasoline taxes, beer taxes, wine taxes, and income taxes.”

Not surprisingly, the report gave higher marks to Republican governors over their Democratic counterparts, but Democratic Gov. Joe Manchin of West Virginia joined Republican governors Mark Sanford of South Carolina, Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, and Pawlenty in the “A” category.

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