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# Potential candidates for the 2012 presidential race

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Election year is just around the corner and some political figures have considered their candidacy for the 2012 presidential election. A recent Rasmussen poll showed that 53 percent of American voters disapprove with the president's performance, while 46 percent approve.

President Barack Obama has already filled out the paperwork to seek re-election. With no clear opponent in his camp, he will probably win the nomination, yet there is a fervor of conservatism that has swept the nation the past election cycle. The passing of the Affordable Care Act that added trillions to the taxpayer pay stub and the current spending spree has left Americans doubting the Democratic leadership and looking to the other party for answers.

Although the major political opponents of Barack Obama haven't officially declared their candidacy for president, various exploratory committees have been formed. Herman Cain, a radio talk show host and former CEO of Godfather's Pizza, is poking the waters to look for support for his classic conservative values and his boost from the Tea Party makes him a very likely candidate for next year's election. Also, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich is looking toward a presidential run. His obvious experience in dealing with the mid-'90s government shutdown with former President Bill Clinton gives him insight into what it takes to balance the budget.

The Republican presidential race comes close to home with former Gov. Tim Pawlenty getting ready to announce his run for the White House. In a study done by the Cato Institute that ranked governors, Pawlenty received an A.

During his governorship he opposed tax increases and cut the state's high corporate franchise tax, while keeping unemployment well below the national average. Pawlenty is even appealing to young voters through an organization called Students for Tim Pawlenty, which has active teams in 12 states across the country. One potential candidate that has shown as a beacon of light in a Republican Party void of leadership is Ron Paul. A candidate in the 2008 presidential election, Paul truly has America's youth behind him. His organization Young Americans for Liberty has over 220 active chapters on high school and college campuses across the U.S. and a newly forming one at UMD. He also has Campaign for Liberty, which spreads the message of the free-market, and Student for Liberty, which engages students in the teachings of liberty. Furthermore, Paul holds the record for the most money raised in 24 hours, pulling in \$6 million in campaign contributions. Certainly Paul can no longer be ignored as a probable candidate. What is interesting about Paul is that he is a libertarian at heart. He holds true to his principles when it comes to voting, crowning him the name 'Dr. No' by his opposition to spending not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution and unjust wars not declared by Congress.

It's because of Paul's beliefs that attract supporters from the liberal camp through his opposition of government regulation of marriage and opposition to the Patriot Act; he has campaigned on the idea of liberty and is a valiant defender of the free-market. His candidacy is likely the only powerhouse that can beat the opposition made from the Democratic Party and his leadership in the Tea Party movement will only help his cause.

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