

Tim Pawlenty

Godfather of No

Minneapolis Star Tribune: Pawlenty Is the “Godfather of No” for Vetoing a Record 34 Bills in 2008 Including Bills to Raise the Minimum Wage and Provide Funding for Stem Cell Research. The Star Tribune noted in the headline of a May 2008 article, “With 34 vetoes, Pawlenty is new godfather of ‘no’.” The story continued, “In vetoing parts or all of 34 bills this session, Gov. Tim Pawlenty surpassed the previous high of 29 vetoes by Gov. Arne Carlson in the 1993 regular session.” Included in the vetoes was a bill in 2008 to raise the minimum wage. The Star Tribune noted, “Gov. Pawlenty also “vetoed embryonic stem cell research legislation, saying rapidly evolving science may make it unnecessary to cross ‘moral and ethical lines’ by destroying live embryos. The bill would have allowed the University of Minnesota to spend state money on embryonic stem cell research. Cells would have come from stored embryos from donors who consented to research use, and an oversight committee would have been required to review the research.” [Star Tribune, 5/30/08; Star Tribune, 5/24/08]

Pawlenty Vetoed a Mortgage Foreclosure Bill Which Would Have Prevented 12,000 Minnesota Families From Losing Their Home. The Star Tribune noted, “The bill’s DFL authors criticized the veto, saying the legislation would have prevented 12,000 Minnesotans from losing their homes to foreclosure and that the governor had chosen to side with the banking industry over ordinary homeowners. Under the bill, homeowners holding a subprime or negative amortization mortgage could defer a pending foreclosure for up to a year but would have to agree to use the services of a foreclosure-prevention counselor and make partial payments during the deferment period.” [Star Tribune, 5/30/08]

Pawlenty Vetoed a Tax Bill Which Provided More Than \$70 Million in Local Government Aid and \$33 Million in Property Tax Relief. “Gov. Tim Pawlenty fulfilled a threat and vetoed a tax bill on Wednesday, taking down with it more than \$70 million in local government aids and \$33 million in direct homeowner property tax relief.” [Star Tribune, 6/2/07]

Pawlenty Twice Vetoed Comprehensive Transportation-Funding Bills with Bipartisan Support in 2005 and 2007. Gov. Tim Pawlenty vetoed a transportation bill in May 2007 which included a higher gas tax he called “untimely and misguided.” Pawlenty also vetoed a transportation bill in 2005. [Associated Press, 5/15/07; WCCO, 2/28/08]

Minnesota’s Capital Outlays for Roads and Transit Ranked 48th in the Nation Per Capita. “Minnesota is falling behind economically in comparison with states that have made significant investments in roads, bridges and transit. Taken together, our capital outlays for roads and transit placed 48th in the nation on a per capita basis.” [Minnesota 2020, 1/2/08]

Pawlenty for Sale

Pawlenty Was Paid a \$4,500 a Month Retainer by a Telecom Company During His Gubernatorial Campaign. “From August 2001 through September 2002, Access Anywhere, a pay-phone company owned partly by Republican ally Elam Baer, paid Pawlenty, a lawyer, \$ 4,500 per month on retainer.” [St. Paul Pioneer Press, 7/17/03]

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Pawlenty Concealed the Salary Until It Was Reported in July 2003; Claimed It Was a Consulting Contract. The Pioneer Press reported that Pawlenty “said he was not obliged to list the pay on his economic disclosure forms when he was serving in the Legislature or running for governor because it was a consulting contract, not an employer-employee relationship. The law that requires candidates and officeholders to list their employment and investments does not cover professional services by lawyers and consultants.” [Pioneer Press, 7/16/03]

Pawlenty Did Not Know How Much Time He Spent Working for Access Anywhere, Where It Was Based or the Other Owners Outside of Baer. The Pioneer Press reported, “Pawlenty said he could not say how much time he spent on work for Access Anywhere, who its owners or officers are other than Baer or where it is incorporated or based.” [Pioneer Press, 7/16/03]

The Star Tribune Claimed Pawlenty’s “Belated and Partial Revelations” Raise As Many Questions As They Answer. The Star Tribune editorial continued, “The governor has made belated and partial revelations that raise as many questions as they answer. But those questions have been clouded in a diversionary fog... If a candidate for governor can be on the payroll of a special-interest friend and shield that fact from voters with impunity, Minnesotans can be sure that many more office-seekers will have such arrangements _ and that voters won’t know about them when they go to the polls.” [Editorial, Star Tribune, 8/7/03]

McCain/Pawlenty = 3rd Bush/Cheney Term:

Pawlenty: “I’d Stand With President Bush if His Approval Rating Was 2 Percent.” The Star Tribune noted in October 2005, “Pawlenty waved off any concerns about Bush, Hatch or other DFLers on Wednesday. ‘I’d stand with President Bush if his approval rating was 2 percent,’ Pawlenty said. ‘I won’t abandon my leader just because times are tough.’” [Star Tribune, 10/20/05]

Pawlenty Was An Early Supporter of the Bush Plan to Privatize Social Security. The Los Angeles Times noted, “Several Republican governors expressed support during interviews Saturday for Bush’s plan for private accounts, including Govs. Lingle of Hawaii, Robert A. Taft of Ohio, Haley Barbour of Mississippi, Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota and Jim Douglas of Vermont, all of whom said the idea was popular with young people in their states.” [Los Angeles Times, 2/27/05]

Pawlenty Was An “Enthusiastic Supporter” of No Child Left Behind and Supported Extending It to High Schools. The Star Tribune reported, “Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty endorsed the centerpiece of President Bush’s second-term education agenda Sunday, backing a plan to extend the federal No Child Left Behind testing requirements to high schools... Pawlenty has been an enthusiastic supporter of No Child Left Behind, but his comments on Sunday were the first time he has endorsed Bush’s plan to push the law’s reach into the nation’s high schools. ‘I think Minnesota could, and should, move in that direction,’ the Republican governor said.” [Star Tribune, 2/28/05]

Pawlenty’s Record: Broken Promises and Wishy-Washy Positions

Pawlenty Starts Softening Promise to Serve Out His Whole Term. “When asked if he will stand by his pledge to serve all four years of his term he said ‘I’m focused on my job, staying in Minnesota being governor.’ Then when the AP pressed again if he would stand by the pledge to serve all four years, Pawlenty said ‘that is my intention.’ That is different than what he said when he announced he was running for governor when he said he ‘will’ serve his whole term (after

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saying he ‘anticipates’ and ‘plans’ to serve his term.” [Twin Cities Public Television blog, 5/1/08]

Pawlenty Broke His Pledge Not to Raise Taxes in 2005 Supporting a Cigarette Tax. An Op-Ed by Jason Lewis in the Wall Street Journal noted, “The pressure on the governor to break his no-new-taxes pledge was unrelenting. Nonetheless, he showed resolve in dealing with Minnesota’s recalcitrant liberal elite. But in 2005, signs of his ‘progressive’ instincts emerged. In a quest for new revenue, Mr. Pawlenty supported a 75 cents per-pack cigarette tax.” [Op-Ed, Conservative Jason Lewis, Wall Street Journal, 2/23/08]

Pawlenty Backtracked on a 1993 Vote to Ban Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation to Win the Republican Nomination. “During the Republican state convention, the Sullivan campaign distributed fliers attacking Pawlenty for supporting a gay rights amendment in 1993. The one vote Pawlenty wishes he could redo is his vote for the gay rights amendment. He says the bill protects people who are transgender and cross-dressers. ‘There’s a whole series of behaviors protected in that bill that have nothing to do with biological makeup. They have to do with, just, simple preferences, for example, of wearing women’s clothing,’ says Pawlenty. ‘I don’t know that we need to ... use our antidiscrimination laws in Minnesota and nationally to protect that kind of behavior.’” [Minnesota Public Radio website, 9/13/02]

Pawlenty Vetoed Stem Cell Research Bill After Claiming To Support It. In his 2006 campaign, Pawlenty stated, ‘I know Mr. Hatch wants to make stem cells an issue, but I’m going to have to disappoint him. We agree on the issue. I support stem cell research,’ Pawlenty told a crowd of about 200 Rochester Chamber of Commerce members and guests at the luncheon debate that also focused on health care. He urged President Bush and the Republican-controlled Congress to lift restrictions on such research.” However, this year Pawlenty “vetoed embryonic stem cell research legislation.” [St. Paul Pioneer Press, 10/6/06, Star Tribune, 5/24/08]

After Cutting Health Care Coverage and Eligibility During His First Term, Pawlenty Pledged to Extend Health Insurance Coverage to All Minnesota Children During His Second Term. “Gov. Pawlenty says he wants to extend health insurance coverage to all Minnesota children. He made the announcement Tuesday during a speech to a group of health care and policy experts in Minneapolis. Pawlenty’s remarks come just one week after he narrowly won re-election and now faces a Legislature that is controlled by Democrats...The move is a dramatic shift for Gov. Pawlenty, who cut health insurance coverage and eligibility during his first term in office. Now, Pawlenty says the state should move toward covering every Minnesotan. He says the first step should be to provide health insurance to every Minnesota child. Pawlenty says the state is projecting a budget surplus and thinks a portion of that money should be used to cover the 70,000 uninsured children in Minnesota.” [Minnesota Public Radio’s website, 11/14/06]

Yet, Pawlenty Aimed to Cut Increases in Health Care Coverage for Lower-Income Children and Childless Adults. “Pawlenty would also roll back hard-fought DFL increases in health care coverage, including increased coverage for lower-income children and childless adults. No one who has health care coverage right now would be cut, he said, but the state cannot afford extensions in coverage.” [Star Tribune, 3/8/08]

Pawlenty Attacked Obama on McCain Gas Tax Holiday After Saying He Was Open To Increasing Minn. Gas Tax. The New York Times wrote, “In the past two years, Gov. Tim

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Pawlenty of Minnesota twice vetoed legislation to raise the state's gas tax to pay for transportation needs. Now, with at least five people dead in the collapse of the Interstate 35W bridge here, Mr. Pawlenty, a Republican, appears to have had a change of heart. 'He's open to that,' Brian McClung, a spokesman for the governor, said Monday of a higher gas tax. 'He believes we need to do everything we can to address this situation and the extraordinary costs.'" But this year, "Wearing his other hat as national co-chair of the McCain presidential campaign Pawlenty sharply criticized the likely Democratic nominee, Senator Barack Obama, for not the idea of a federal gas tax holiday. 'Senator McCain has called for a temporary gas tax holiday to provide at least some immediate relief for Minnesotans and Americans as they face these historic and burdensome gasoline prices,' Pawlenty said, 'And Senator Obama has said no to that idea.'" [New York Times, 8/7/07, KARE 11 (Local NBC Affiliate), 7/24/08]

Ethical Problems

Pawlenty's Campaign Received \$600,000 in Penalties, the Largest in Minnesota History in 2002 for Illegal Coordination. "The state campaign finance board leveled \$600,000 in penalties against then-Republican gubernatorial candidate Tim Pawlenty to settle a board finding of illegal collusion on TV ads. The State Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board fined the campaign \$100,000 and charged it with \$500,000 in ad spending." [Star Tribune, 10/15/02]

Pawlenty's Talking Points Stress Selling Access to Next President to CEOs. The Star Tribune noted, "The Campaign Finance institute's report noted that at a fundraising breakfast for Minnesota CEOs, Pawlenty's 'talking points' to donors included a statement that they would have the opportunity to 'connect with influential government officials (Cabinet, President, next President).'" [Star Tribune, 6/4/08]

Budget Problems

Minnesota Has Gone from \$1 Billion Surplus in February 2007 to Close to a Billion Dollar Deficit in February 2008. The Star Tribune reported, "Minnesota has slipped from a \$1 billion surplus projected in February 2007 to a \$935 million deficit projected last month, with revenues tumbling in every major tax category." [Star Tribune, 3/8/08]

The National Taxpayers Union Blasted Pawlenty for Increasing Taxes by \$1.7 Billion Since He Became Governor in 2003. The National Taxpayers Union noted, "Overall, during Pawlenty's tenure, taxes have increased \$1.74 billion (with a b). Some supporters might attempt to describe these increases as merely fees, but consumers and corporations nevertheless have to pay the bill. To his credit, Pawlenty has proposed a modest \$77.3 million reduction in sales taxes for FY 2009, but this is more than offset with \$138.7 million in other tax and fee hikes." [National Taxpayer's Union Blog, 7/2/08]

The Cato Institute Called Pawlenty a "Big Spender." In a June 2008 blog post, the Cato Institute called Pawlenty an "economic populist and big-spender generally." [Cato Institute Blog Post, 6/24/08]

Political Lightweight

Pawlenty Has Twice Failed to Get 50% in His Gubernatorial Races. Pawlenty won in 2002 with 44% of the vote to 36% for the Democrat Sen. Roger Moe and 16% for Independence Party

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candidate Tim Penny. In 2006, Pawlenty barely survived winning 47% to 46% over Democrat Mike Hatch, with Independence Party candidate Peter Hutchinson garnering 6%. [National Journal's Almanac of American Politics]

Since Pawlenty Became Governor, Minnesota Republicans Have Lost 43 Legislative Seats.

Since 2002, Republicans have lost 33 seats in the Minnesota House of Representatives, falling from 81 in January 2003 (with one Republican vacancy at the time) to 49 today. In the Senate, Republicans have lost 10 members, falling from 31 in January 2003 (with one Independence Party member caucusing with the Republicans at the time) to 22 today. [Minnesota Legislature, House of Representatives data, Accessed 2/7/08; Senate data, Accessed 2/7/08; DFL Press Release, 2/7/08]

Despite Pawlenty Endorsement, McCain Lost Minnesota Caucuses by 19 Points. The Washington Post's The Fix Blog wrote, "The lack of a political operation (for Pawlenty in Minnesota) was put in sharp relief earlier this year when Pawlenty was unable to deliver a victory for McCain in the state's Feb. 5 caucuses. Although the vote came after it was clear that McCain was the frontrunner for the nomination, Romney trounced the Arizona Senator by 19 points in the caucuses. Pawlenty's inability to back up his endorsement of McCain with a win in his state suggests a woefully weak political operation." [Washington Post's The Fix blog, 6/20/08]

On Caucus Night, Democrats Almost Quadrupled Their Republican Counterparts in Turnout in Minnesota. The Pioneer Press reported, "An estimated 240,000 DFLers turned out for DFL caucuses on February 5, compared to about 65,000 Republicans." [Pioneer Press, 2/7/08]