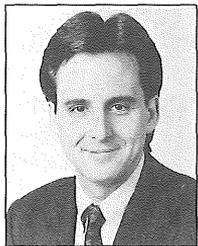


Pawlenty hopes to bridge suburban, urban concerns

Partisanship and polemics have always been present in politics. But Rep. Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) isn't planning on investing in old ideas or past divisions. Pawlenty wants to build bridges across both partisan and economic lines.



"I would call myself a 'different kind of Republican.' I don't fall into any kind of traditional pigeon-hole," he said.

Rep. Tim Pawlenty Pawlenty, a 32-year-old attorney, is a proud product of an ethnic, blue collar family that he said is largely apolitical. A self-defined "student of policy" and "a product of local government," he majored in political science at the University of Minnesota and went on to graduate from the university's law school. He then served on both the Eagan Planning Commission and the Eagan City Council. Pawlenty won district 38B's open seat when former Rep. Art Seaberg opted for a run at the state Senate.

Prior to the 1993 legislative session, Pawlenty worked with Minnesota's chapter of Common Cause — an organization working to promote

open government and political reform — to develop his legislative agenda. In fact, Pawlenty has already introduced (HF163), a bill aimed at reducing the influence of interest group contributions in political campaigns.

Changing the way Minnesota politicians think about public policy is another of Pawlenty's goals. Specifically, he wants others to realize that the entire metro area is linked by a common culture and an integrated economy.

"I feel very strongly that we would be remiss to simply focus on 'suburban issues' and a 'suburban agenda' when the core of the inner cities — the central, urban areas of St. Paul and Minneapolis — are suffering greatly. Suburbs need to have partnerships with the urban areas . . . because we're all in this together."

Pawlenty said that the homogeneous stereotypes of Minnesota suburbs are misleading. "We have a much more diverse population than people might imagine," he said. And increasingly, some suburbs also have more problems — housing decay and declining economic status among them.

Pawlenty made it clear that he wants to reach out to those troubled core areas, which are represented almost exclusively by DFLers.

"They can't do it alone," he said. "The problems are too big."

While DFLers seem receptive, Pawlenty said he believes members of his party "by and large have vacated the agenda" of the cities.

Republicans need to articulate a vision that appeals to the "mainstream" and to a more diverse coalition of voters, he said.

"I think that if the Republican party is ever going to be a majority party, particularly in Minnesota, it has to diversify. . . not simply focus on tax and spend issues and social issues."

— Adam Samaha

District 38B

Population: 31,928

Distribution: wholly urban; all residents live within a city.

Counties: Dakota

Largest city: Eagan

Location: south Metro

1992 presidential election results:

Bush/Quayle: 36.2 percent

Clinton/Gore: 38.2 percent

Perot/Stockdale: 25.2 percent

Other: 0.4 percent