



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on August 14, 2011

## Iowa Straw Poll: Bachmann Wins, Paul Close Second

Bachmann stressed her Iowa family roots in her remarks at the Ames Hilton Coliseum, [stating](#) that "I tell people everything I needed to learn in life I learned in Iowa" and that "I'm a seventh generation Iowan." That certainly didn't hurt her chances, nor did her [repeated talking points](#) about "making Obama a one-term president."



The Iowa University rally and straw poll is seen as the most important poll of the presidential election because Iowa is the first caucus state in the presidential race, though the poll is seen as a better measure of organization and energy rather than a guarantee of eventual victory in the February 6 caucus. Iowa Republican Party Chairman Matt Strawn called the straw poll successful, telling CNN after the poll results were announced that it was the "second largest turnout that we've ever had in the straw poll history."

The poll will give a political bounce to Bachmann and Paul for their strong finishes. "The loyalty of Ron Paul's supporters is acknowledged even by his opponents." Fox News Channel reporter Carl Cameron said after the straw poll results were announced. He then acknowledged that "Ron Paul comes out of this very much empowered."

Ron Paul entered the stage of the Hilton Coliseum to the background music of "[America First](#)" by country music legend Merle Haggard and stressed his pro-life credentials before moving on to his non-interventionist foreign policy. "It's time to bring the troops home," he [told](#) the crowd in remarks that contrasted with Bachmann. Bachmann [touted herself as](#) a "national security conservative," a phrase used frequently by neoconservatives to justify military intervention in countries that have not attacked the United States.

Paul advocates immediate withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, and has stated he would "talk to" Iran about its nuclear ambitions rather than engage in economic sanctions. Bachmann's [campaign website](#) makes no mention of withdrawing from Iraq or Afghanistan, but it warns direly about "the true threat in the Middle East: a potentially nuclear-armed Iran" and declares that an end to the war on terror is "premature."

Paul also took time to explain to the Iowa Republicans that the Patriot Act violated the Fourth Amendment's requirements for specificity and probable cause by [noting](#): "You cannot repeal the Fourth Amendment in order to say, 'yes, we can give up a little bit of our freedoms to be safe.' You never have to give up liberties to be safe." Bachmann has repeatedly voted to reauthorize the Patriot Act.

The Iowa straw poll, which stressed the anti-establishment candidates, was in part upstaged by Texas



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Governor Rick Perry's announcement of his candidacy the same day in South Carolina. And Perry's announcement has some political spin professionals chiming the tune that "Rick Perry's presidential run reorders 2012 landscape." Politico [reported](#) of Perry that "He's not just larger than life — he's bigger than the Ames Straw Poll. His dramatic entrance alters the whole campaign." That hype remains to be seen, however, though it's unlikely Perry would siphon many votes from Paul.

Former Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty placed a distant third at 14 percent (2,293 votes), less than half the tally of either Bachmann or Paul, and had announced before the poll that he had to place at least third without seriously downsizing his campaign. His campaign released a [statement](#) after the poll that his campaign will "have a lot more work to do."

Other candidates finished with the following [results](#): former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum (10 percent), businessman Herman Cain (9 percent), Texas Governor Rick Perry (4 percent on a write-in ballot) former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney (3 percent), Former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Newt Gingrich (2 percent) and less than one percent for former Utah Governor Jon Huntsman and U.S. Representative Thaddeus McCotter.

*Photo of Michele Bachmann at Iowa Straw Poll: AP Images*



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