

Pawlenty, Santorum Join Social Conservative Groups' Bus Tour



2012 presidential hopefuls Tim Pawlenty, left, and Rick Santorum cross campaign paths and shake hands on April 15 in Concord, N.H. (AP Images/Jim Cole)

Republican presidential candidates former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty and former Sen. Rick Santorum (Pa.) are set to participate in a "Values Voter Bus Tour" next week, which will lead up to the Ames Straw Poll on Aug. 13.

"The Values Bus Tour will speak to the views held by millions of American voters who want to make sure that issues impacting the family and the broader culture are understood and addressed by each of the candidates," Family Research Council President Tony Perkins says. "The race is clearly wide open. Values voters will be closely watching next week's events as they determine which of the candidates are willing to do what it takes once elected to restore fiscal sanity, protect marriage, safeguard religious liberty and protect the rights of the unborn."

The Family Research Council, the National Organization for Marriage and the Susan B. Anthony List have organized the

four-day tour, which will pass through 47 of Iowa's 99 counties with events in 22 cities.

"The Values Voter Bus Tour is designed to get the word out to straw poll and caucus-goers regarding which presidential candidates can be counted on as strong and vocal leaders for women and unborn children," explains Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List.

The current front-runner to win the straw poll, Republican Sen.

Michele Bachmann, is also expected to join the tour, along with other

GOP presidential candidates. Faith Family Freedom Fund Chairman

Connie Mackey will kick off the tour on Tuesday.

U.S. Reps. Steve King (R-IA) and Louie Gohmert (R-TX) will also

join Perkins, Musgrave, National Organization for Marriage President

Brian Brown, and other state and national leaders.

"NOM is committed to ensuring that the next president is a strong and committed supporter of traditional marriage and will

commit his or her administration to vigorously defending marriage in

the courts, Congress and in the court of public opinion,"

Brown comments. "We look forward to playing an extremely active role in encouraging the people of Iowa, including our tens of

thousands of supporters, to make a difference in selecting an

unambiguously pro-marriage candidate in Iowa.”