

# Michele Bachmann never won a tight jeans contest

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Not once, but twice now, The New York Times' Gail Collins has pushed Idaho Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter for president.

First she argued that if Texas Gov. Rick Perry was going to become the latest of former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney's rivals to falter, why not a new contender from the Gem State?

Then Wednesday, she bemoaned the inexorable slide toward Romney's 13-month-long campaign against Barack Obama and made one more plea for Otter to liven things up. If nothing else, an Otter boomlet would justify her parachuting into Idaho.

"I have never been to Idaho, so I would like that very much," Collins wrote. "In fact, if we can't have Gov. Butch Otter, I think we should try to find a Republican governor from another state that I've never visited."

Just for the record, this is a joke.

Right?

Gail?

So in that spirit, here are the Top Ten reasons Otter should get in the race:

No. 10: No more talk at the U.S. Department of Agriculture about ditching Idaho spuds from the school lunch menu. From now on, it's hash browns for breakfast and french fries for lunch. Super-sized, if you please.

No. 9: If Otter couldn't kill public broadcasting in Idaho, maybe he'll have more luck nationally. Infomercials on "Sesame Street." "Lonesome Dove" on "Masterpiece Theater." NPR? DOA.

No. 8: Michele Bachmann? Herman Caine? Newt Gingrich? Who are they kidding? None of them ever won a tight jeans contest.

No. 7: You want education reform? Take a page from Otter's successful drive to gut collective bargaining, undermine teacher tenure and replace a bunch of Democratic-

voting educators with nonpartisan, robotic, totally apathetic laptop computers and online instruction. Instead of No Child Left Behind, it's crack open a book. Reboot your computer. Kick a teacher.

No. 6: Uncle Sam out of money? Here's where you find some. Privatize. Frack the national parks for oil. Sell off the highways for megaload transports. Cut the cost of disaster relief by losing the paperwork. (Ask Lewis County commissioners and farmers to explain.)

No. 5: Cabinet choices. Shadow Gov. Mike Gwartney runs the spooks at the CIA. Part-time legislator and full-time tax scofflaw Phil Hart is IRS commissioner. Evenhandedness was a problem for Royce Chigbrow at the State Tax Commission until he resigned under pressure. How about Chigbrow as FBI director? Idaho Freedom Foundation Executive Director Wayne Hoffman espouses openness for everybody but himself. Just what you'd want in a White House press secretary. And for EPA administrator - who cares? You won't need one.

No. 4: Foreign policy. If it took a Richard Nixon to go to China, then only Butch Otter could plant a little piece of China right smack in the middle of the Boise airport.

No. 3: If the Tea Party's godfather, Ron Paul, can't get the nomination, Otter's the next best thing. Besides, nobody ever accused Otter of being a Paul look-a-like.

No. 2: Capitals for a day. We're talking real capitals. Des Moines, Iowa. Concord, N.H. Tallahassee, Fla. Columbia, S.C. And if Otter is out hustling for votes in the GOP presidential primary states, Idahoans might just see a little more of him.

And the No. 1 reason: Here's the list of former and current Republican governors who have announced, are contemplating it or have dropped out: Haley Barbour of Mississippi. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota. Sam Brownback of Kansas. Jon Huntsman of Utah. Mitch Daniels of Indiana. Jeb Bush of Florida. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas. Gary Johnson of New Mexico. Sarah Palin of Alaska. Buddy Roemer of Louisiana. Bob McDonnell of Virginia. Not to mention New Jersey's Chris Christie - who bowed out Tuesday - Romney and Perry.

As Collins freely admits, she's running out of options. - M.T.