

## Big wins for Christie, de Blasio, Obama's broken promise, and should Puerto Rico become a state? – US blog round up for 2 – 8 November

Chris Gilson looks at the best in political blogging from the Beltway and across the States.

### Elections this week

Tuesday sees elections across much of the U.S., at state and local level, with the most attention focused on the New Jersey and Virginia gubernatorial elections, as well as the New York Mayoral election. In the lead up to the vote in New York, Democrat Bill de Blasio enjoyed a commanding poll lead, looking certain to win. On Saturday, *Via Meadia* looked at why we should [fear de Blasio](#) – not because he is likely to try and raise taxes on the rich, but because he is likely to do little to address the potential decline of the middle classes in the city once the Federal Reserve Bank's policy of quantitative easing begins to come to an end. *American Thinker* on the other hand, is concerned that de Blasio is [looking the other way](#) on New York's crime problems. After de Blasio is elected, *The Atlantic* looks at his 'biracial cool', while the *New Yorker* [says](#) that his populist campaign message, which was so effective, was a reaction to a changed political environment.

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On Sunday, ahead of the Virginia election for governor, *Outside the Beltway* writes that even before the polls had opened the [blame game](#) had already begun to explain the Republican candidate Ken Cuccinelli's likely defeat. *The American Prospect* looks at how the race has ended up being a 'stinker', with two flawed candidates. Meanwhile, *Doug Ross* [wrote](#) that a cloud of federal investigations was casting a shadow on the Democratic candidate, Terry McAuliffe, over the use of a federal investor-visa program by one of his companies. *Hit & Run* [looks](#) at the role of the libertarian candidate, Robert Sarvis in the



Terry McAuliffe By Miller Center [CC-BY-2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons

election, saying that he offers a real alternative to Republican and Democratic candidates on offer. McAuliffe went on to win the election by a much lower margin than expected. Afterwards, *Outside the Beltway* [wonders](#) why by Thursday, Cuccinelli had not yet called him to concede. Meanwhile, *Red State* [argues](#) that the Republican Washington establishment is most to blame for the election's loss, though *Via Meadia* says that the very narrow margin of victory has put Democrats into a [panic](#), fearing that the problems with Obamacare may have had a major influence.

The re-election of Republican Governor Chris Christie in New Jersey was also a near certainty this week, [according](#) to *Outside the Beltway* which had him on a more than 24 point lead over his Democratic rival Barbara Buono. *Crooks & Liars* covers a public argument between Christie and a teacher this week, where he is said to have shouted "I am tired of you people!"

## Affordable Care

While much of the media's attention was focused on elections this week, the problems with the rollout of the Affordable Health Care Act continued, with scrutiny moving away from the website's problems to the likelihood that many Americans would lose their current health coverage. On Saturday, *Hit & Run* [writes](#) that the administration's officials were aware that Obama's promise earlier this year that people could keep their insurance plans was not correct, and still let him make it. *Roll Call* [echoes](#) this, writing that Obamacare was a broken promise from the very beginning, as the President's promise was in direct conflict with the mandates of the law.

*Wonkblog* [looks](#) at the main problem with Obamacare – that people with pre-existing conditions will now be covered. With the end to the existing discrimination against the old and sick, premiums will now be rising. On Thursday, *United Liberty* looks at the [Republican alternatives to Obamacare](#), despite Democratic claims that they have not offered any ideas.

*The Hill's Congress Blog* urges everyone to '[calm down](#)' over the on-going problems with the Healthcare.gov website, saying that legally insurance isn't required until next March, and that we should step back and provide some perspective, given the scope of the project.

## Government and the Beltway

*The Atlantic* argues that after 224 years of commendable service, the U.S. constitution needs to be replaced, and [looks](#) at how we might go about it. Meanwhile, *The Monkey Cage* [writes](#) on how the U.S. could look to the UK for lessons on how to fix administrative problems faced during elections.

This week sees the Employment and Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit hiring and firing people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, debated by Congress. *Roll Call* [looks](#) at the White House's strategy of moving the bill through Congress, rather than issuing an Executive Order. *Daily Kos* [says](#) that after the Senate's approval of the bill, many Republicans outside Congress have been highly critical of the GOP for not doing more to stop the bill.

*The Hill's Congress Blog* makes the case for the U.S. territory of [Puerto Rico to become a state](#), a year after a majority of its residents voted in favour of this in a referendum.

This week saw Kentucky Junior Senator Rand Paul accused of plagiarizing passages in his book from a Heritage Foundation Report, as well as a recent op-ed from another article he did not write. *Hit & Run* looks at the allegations, saying that as someone who is interested in running for President, Paul should be [cleaner than his competition](#).

## Foreign policy

*Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) on recent accusations that the Pentagon does not recognize married gay couples, meaning that spouses are often unable to stay with their partners who have been posted overseas.

*The Monkey Cage* looks at the recent NSA spying revelations, [saying](#) that one element that seems to have been largely missed is the level of intelligence cooperation, data sharing, and the bureaucratic relationships between



Capitol of Puerto Rico Credit: MPD01605 (Creative Commons BY SA)

countries.

This week Secretary of State John Kerry visited Poland. *The Foundry* uses this as an opportunity to point out that as it reduces its military presence in the region, Eastern Europe continues to seem to be an [afterthought](#) for the U.S.

## **The economy and society**

*Wonkblog* [looks](#) at the rising trend across national and local politics, especially by Republican state legislatures, to roll back unions and other protections for public workers across the U.S. Meanwhile, *The Atlantic* says that with its lack of legislation on the matter, Washington has [abandoned unpaid interns](#). *Daily Kos* [looks](#) at President Obama's record on addressing income inequality. They find that while inequality increased in Obama's first term, new policies such as Obamacare and changes to the tax code should have significant impacts.

*Via Meadia* [looks](#) at the increasing popularity of shale gas extraction ('fracking'), writing that smaller, more nimble firms are often the most successful, as they are able to be more flexible and experimental in their drilling.

## **Across the States**

### **Northeast**

*Daily Kos* [looks](#) at the Boston mayoral race this week, saying that the victory of union worker, Marty Walsh is one for progressives and workers.

*Politics PA* [looks](#) at Pennsylvania's 'bad penny' – tax reform, which has been debated since the 1970s.

In Vermont, *VTDigger* [covers](#) the split in the state's Republican Party, which will be on full display this weekend as the party moves to elect a new chair.

New York is considering legalizing gambling in the state. *NY State of Politics* [looks](#) to Atlantic City to provide an example of what can happen to a city that allows gambling, concluding that 'broken promises and disappointment' may be a likely outcome.

### **South**

*Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) that former Florida Governor, Charlie Crist, has announced that he will be running for governor again, this time as a Democrat, in 2014. They say that this may actually be a smart political move for Crist, who has not had a great deal of luck, with a failed Senate bid behind him, in recent years. Still in Florida, *Political Carnival* [covers](#) the trial of a local Sheriff who allegedly destroyed the evidence that he had booked a driver who was drunk and carrying a weapon without a permit.

This week sees a runoff election in the Republican primary for Alabama's 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional district. *Daily Kos* [says](#) that an underfunded 'birther' very nearly won the GOP's nomination, even after the winner outspent him by a factor of four.

### **Midwest**

*Political Heat* [takes issue](#) with the claims of many gun advocates that Chicago is the 'murder capital of the U.S.', writing that using murder rates – not sheer numbers – puts the city well below many others.

The state of Illinois has a pension liability of \$173 billion. *Via Meadia* is [amazed](#) that the state's legislature, despite the demands of Governor Pat Quinn, has again been unable to do anything about this massive liability.

North Dakota's *SayAnythingblog* [wonders](#) if the state should be paying millions to expand its college campuses, given that enrolment for in-state students has been on the decline in recent years.

### **West and Pacific**

On Tuesday, *Outside the Beltway* [covers](#) the non-binding referendum in some northern Colorado counties over secession from the state. They say that while the odds of a serious secession movement are low, it does show the conflict between the urbanized areas of Colorado, and its more traditionally Republican parts.

California's *Capitol Alert* [says](#) that the state still has the highest poverty rate in the U.S., even under a new method of calculation from the Census Bureau, writing that nearly 24 percent of the population (or 9 million) people live in poverty.

*The Mudflats* covers the continuing campaign in Alaska to [recall](#) State Representative Lindsey Holmes, who changed her allegiances to the Republican Party after her election.

Hawaii's *Honolulu Civil Beat* [looks](#) at the controversy over the Same-Sex Marriage bill that is currently before the state legislature.

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*Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of USApp– American Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.*

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