

Snow problems for de Blasio in New York, gun carry laws on states' agenda, and Wisconsin's Walker under fire – US state blog round up for round up for 15 – 21 February

USApp Assistant Editor, **Natalie Allen**, and Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson** look at the week in U.S. state blogging. [Click here](#) for our weekly roundup of national blogs.

Northeast

Bill de Blasio made headlines once more in New York this week. *The Monkey Cage* [writes](#) that the New York City Mayor is at risk of alienating his “base,” the elementary school children most of his policies (such as free universal pre-K and after school activities) have been aimed at, if he continues to deny them snow days when the other schools in the region are closed. Among other criticisms, *The Lonely Conservative* also [condemns](#) de Blasio for mishandling the snow, writing that he is a “communist ideologue, not a competent manager,” and that other progressive Democrats are already distancing themselves from him. *Occasional Planet* [reports](#) that New York City will now be printing ballots in 10-point type, instead of the eye-straining 6-point that was previously used; this was necessary to incorporate five different languages on to a single ballot, a problem which will be solved by simply printing 3 sets of ballots in the future.

After New Jersey Senator Cory Booker volunteered to stop by someone's house to help dig them out after a massive snowstorm, *Save Jersey* [writes](#) that Booker is willing to “willing to do any job other than help you find or create one.”

MassPoliticsProfs [examines](#) whether Boston should put in a bid to host the Olympics, arguing that the Olympics are a global project embedded in local communities and therefore prior to any bid, the city should consider the costs that local communities would have to bear in order to prepare for and host the games.

In New Hampshire, *Miscellany Blue* [looks at](#) California Congressman Darrell Issa's recent trip to the Granite State where he was given a less than

warm welcome by both the Democrats, who accused him of pursuing ideological witch hunts with his investigation of Benghazi, and by the Tea Party, who called him a “clueless RINO.”

Green Mountain Daily [decries](#) the new Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle acquired by the Vermont State Police, who purchased it used from the Department of Defense's national military surplus program for less than \$8000, arguing that the police will now be looking for an opportunity to play with their new toy in peaceful Vermont.

South

In Virginia, *Bearing Drift* [condemns](#) the state's Democratic Party for killing a bill that would have increased funds



Credit: Joe Shlabotnik (Creative Commons BY NC SA)

available to victims of domestic and sexual violence, claiming that they did so because the bill was sponsored by a Republican delegate, Barbara Comstock, who is running for Congress in 2014. Across the aisle, *Blue Virginia* [denounces](#) the State Republicans who have recently passed three bills loosening gun control in the Old Dominion State, the most recent of which allows teachers and other school employees to have firearms on school property.

Moving to West Virginia, *Daily Kos* [reports](#) on another coal-related spill in the state. In the third such spill in the state in six weeks, melting snow sent debris from sediment ponds into a local creek.

Occasional Planet [examines](#) North Carolina's new gun law, which allows gun owners more concealed weapons and opens new places for them to carry, arguing that the law disproportionately harms women and teenagers who often fall victim to gun violence.

Gun control also made headlines in South Carolina this week, *PoliticoUSA* [writes that](#) the "constitutional carry" bill, which would have permitted anyone to carry a concealed or open firearm in public without a permit, was shot down by the State Senate Judiciary Panel 17-4, a resounding defeat for Tea Party Senate Candidate Lee Bright and South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley who supported the legislation.

And in Georgia, *Georgia Tipsheet* [reports](#) that the State House has approved a measure to further loosen gun control; the bill would allow licensed gun owners to carry firearms in a number of new places, including bars, churches, and non-secure government buildings. Shifting away from gun control, *Crooks and Liars* [looks at](#) the costs of the coverage gap created by the state's rejection of the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion, which is projected to result in the death of 1,175 people this year and the closing of multiple hospitals because they do not have enough patients who can pay for their medical expenses.



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In Florida, *RedState* [ponders](#) the reasons Alex Sink, Democratic candidate for the 13th district special election, has insisted NBC and their correspondent Chuck Todd not be involved in an upcoming debate. Meanwhile, *The Shark Tank* [writes](#) that incumbent Governor Rick Scott displayed his love of guns by attending Victor Bean's Southern Classic Gun & Knife Show, at the same time candidate Charlie Crist reiterated his newfound belief in smaller magazines and extended background checks, while refusing to answer questions on a potential assault weapons ban. *The Seminole Democrat* angrily [rejects](#) those pursuing anti-abortion policies in Florida who simultaneously make it more difficult to prevent an unwanted pregnancy or to care for a child after he or she is born.

Brain and Eggs [looks at](#) the upcoming battle for Texas, arguing if the Democrats can get voters to turn up at the polls, which has proved to be a problem in recent elections, the state's changing demographics could soon see the Longhorn State turn blue.

Midwest

In Kansas, *The American Prospect* [reports](#) that the bill passed through the State House of Representatives, which would allow private businesses and state employees to deny LGBT people services if they are motivated by religious beliefs, seems uniquely mean-spirited because it calls for religious exemptions from protections that do

not yet exist in Kansas where it is still legal in many cases to deny service and employment based on sexual orientation.

In Missouri, *Crooks and Liars* [writes](#) that the Westboro Baptist Church was prevented from protesting gay football player Michael Sam at a University of Missouri basketball game when students formed a human wall around the basketball stadium. *Crooks and Liars* also [looks at](#) Missouri state Congressmen Rick Brattin's most recent attempt to limit the teaching of evolution in public schools by requiring parents to be notified when it would be covered and allowed to exempt their children from those classes.

Blog for Iowa [calls for](#) residents to sign a petition to the Iowa legislators to prohibit the piloting of drones from within the state after it was revealed that the Iowa Air National Guard is training to control Reaper drones.

Plunderbund [examines](#) the possibility that Ohio Governor John Kasich could be the GOP nominee for the 2016 presidential race, noting that four modern Ohio governors have created a similar buzz and failed to secure the nomination.

Progress Illinois [reports](#) that in Chicago public sector workers and retirees have formed a coalition in response to the city's pension reform plan, which could include benefit cuts. Presently, the five city pension systems are facing a combined budget shortfall of \$20 billion.

In Michigan, *Eclectablog* [writes](#) that state Republicans ignored democratic norms in a meeting of the Michigan House Financial Liability Reform Committee during the discussion of a bill calling for a federal [Constitutional Convention](#). Republicans want a convention to pass an amendment that would require the federal government to operate on a balanced budget and the Republican committee chair blocked state Democrats from adding additional topics, including campaign finance reform, protecting Social Security, and restricting the use of eminent domain.

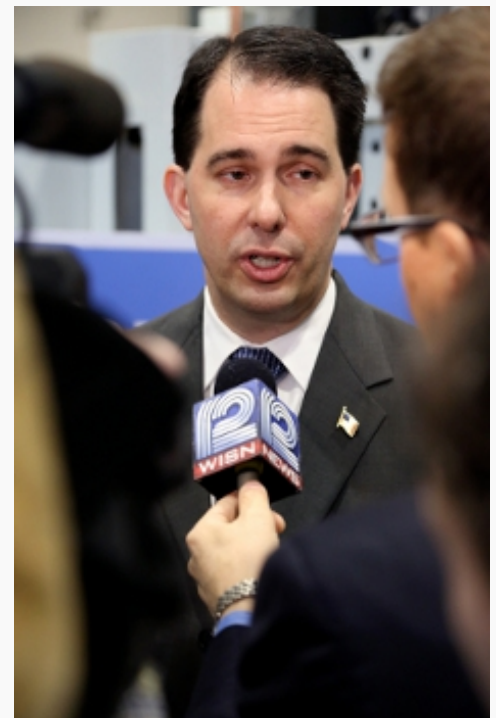
In Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker has come under fire after a judge released nearly 30,000 emails as part of the 2010 John Doe investigation into fundraising and campaign activities of Walker and his aides. *Crooks and Liars* [details](#) the contents of several of the emails, including current Republican National Committee Chairman, Reince Priebus, passing information about Walker's opponent's strategy, and two very racist jokes passed around by Walker's aides. *Caffeinated Politics* [writes](#) that beyond partisan politics, these emails reveal a side of politicians the public does not normally get to see and it will allow average voters to take full measure of Scott Walker before the next election. *The Prairie Badger* [scolds](#) the three Democratic members of the Wisconsin State Assembly, who created accountability measures for the school voucher program, for "aiding and abetting Republican efforts to dismantle public education in Wisconsin."

In Minnesota, *Crooks and Liars* [reports](#) on the three state representatives who are living on the minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour for a week to raise awareness as they push to raise the state minimum to \$9.50 an hour.

West and Pacific

National Journal writes on Tuesday that many of Hawaii's [polls](#) may not be accurate, after some surprising results came to light this week. They say that the State's complex ethnic mix can make representative sampling difficult.

Moving over to Oregon, *The Volokh Conspiracy* [says](#) that the state has the highest rate of non-medical childhood vaccination exemptions of any state. They say that dodging vaccinations is 'truly nuts'.



Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker Credit: Gateway Technical College (Creative Commons BY NC ND)

On Saturday, *FreakOutNation* reports that a committee in the Wyoming State House has passed a bill that would allow school district employees to carry concealed weapons in schools. [They ask](#), what could possibly go wrong?

This week, *The Feed* [writes](#) that Colorado is the place to watch for health reform, as the state has taken steps to make healthcare prices more transparent. On Wednesday, *The Spot* writes that the Colorado State Senate has put aside its partisan differences to vie to host the 2016 [Republican National Convention](#). Still in the Centennial State, *ColoradoPols.com* [says](#) that State Representative, Jared Wright, left a loaded gun behind after a committee hearing on concealed carry permits.

On Wednesday, *Blog for Arizona* [reports](#) that the state's Senate has passed a Religious Bigotry Bill, something they call 'state-sanctioned segregation'. They say that the bill will allow individuals and businesses to deny public services based on their religious beliefs, and will allow for 'discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, sex and religion'.

Over in California, *Capitol Alert* [says](#) that both main parties are losing ground in voter registration in the Golden State, with levels down on what they were at the same time before the 2010 primary.

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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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