

## Cuomo's tax freeze backlash in New York, limits to immigrants' rights in Georgia, and Jerry Brown not sold on marijuana legalization in California – US state blog round up for 1 – 7 March

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

In Maine, *Daily Kos* [examines](#) a U.S. Department of Labor review which concluded that Governor Paul LePage threatened the fair-hearings process last year when he told the state's unemployment hearing officers that they were deciding too many cases in favor of workers.

*VTDigger* [looks at](#) the upcoming battle between the Vermont Statehouse and Burlington's local government over the addition of gun control provisions to the city charter that conflict with state law. The ballot measure, which was approved by an overwhelming majority in the city, would "ban guns from any establishment with a liquor license, allow police to seize them after domestic abuse incidents and require firearms to be locked at all times." *VTDigger* also [details](#) Vermont Gas Systems' attempts to acquire land in Addison County to build a natural gas pipeline, explaining that if the landowners do not wish to sell, the company will have a strong case for using eminent domain to obtain the desired properties.

*Granite Grok* [writes](#) that the most important reason the New Hampshire Republicans should block the state's Medicaid expansion is because the state's Democrats have not protested the measure and it must therefore benefit them. *PoliticusUSA* [notes](#) that New Hampshire voters have not embraced former Massachusetts Senator Scott Brown since he moved to the Granite State. A recent poll from the Boston Herald shows that only 33% of voters view him favorably and 11% said the first word they thought of when they heard Brown's name was 'carpetbagger.'

*Daily Kos* [reports](#) that the governors of Connecticut and New York will increase heating assistance to low-income residents so that they can maintain their SNAP benefits (food stamps) after the federal government tied the two benefits through a program called "heat and eat." Staying in New York, *The Lonely Conservative* [looks at](#) the composition of Bill de Blasio's administration, saying that Karl Marx would have been right at home as most members are progressives chosen on their ideology rather than their managerial experience. *Capitol Confidential* [examines](#) the backlash from Governor Andrew Cuomo's proposed \$1.4 billion property tax freeze, noting that more than 100 local officials have sent a letter to Cuomo warning that the plan will result in cuts to vital services.

In New Jersey, *PolitickerNJ* [writes](#) that Democratic fundraiser and political power broker George Norcross III took some lighthearted jabs at Governor Chris Christie at a ground-breaking ceremony for a new elementary school in Camden, saying that he has successfully been able to shut down a bridge (for a charitable run) a feat that Christie had yet to achieve. *Save Jersey* [decries](#) the recent Rutgers University New Brunswick Faculty Council resolution encouraging the university to rescind its invitation to Condoleezza Rice to be this year's commencement speaker, writing that this is evidence the so-called War on Women is a partisan ploy for the female vote.

In Rhode Island, *RI Future* [looks at](#) drug use in the Ocean State, arguing that much of the current issues with heroin and other potent drugs are linked to the abuse of prescription drugs caused by the doctors over prescribing certain medications. Meanwhile, *WPRI* [reports](#) that the share working of Rhode Island residents is at its lowest point since April 1983; only 58.8% of the population over the age of 16 was employed as of November and December 2013.

*Daily Kos* [writes](#) that, in an uncharacteristic move, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett is following the governors

of Connecticut and New York in expanding heating assistance for low income residents so that they may maintain their SNAP benefits.

## South

In Washington DC, *Hit & Run Blog* [reports](#) that the city council voted in favor of a measure to decriminalize marijuana possession in the district. While it is still a criminal offense to sell the drug, the move makes the capitol one of the most lenient places in the nation for marijuana, with only a \$25 fine for possession.

*BlueNC* [encourages](#) all North Carolinians to pay attention to the May primary for one of the State Supreme Court seats as Justice Robin Hudson is facing challenges after her dissent on two major cases last year. *Appalachian Voices* [examines](#) a recent poll showing that 93 percent of voters in North Carolina want state lawmakers to force Duke Energy to clean up the Dan River coal ash spill, while 83 percent want Duke to clean up all of its coal ash sites and move the toxic waste to dry landfills.

*Hit & Run Blog* [writes](#) that the Georgia House Health and Human Services Committee unanimously passed a bill to legalize the use of CBD cannabis oil for treating children with seizure disorders, glaucoma, and nausea associated with cancer treatments. While this may seem like progress, The Marijuana Policy Project says similar programs in other states show that the bill is too restrictive in its current form. *Peach Pundit* [looks at](#) a recent Asian American Legal Advocacy Center (AALAC) campaign to protest two bills that would limit immigrants' and non-English speakers' access to drivers licenses. The AALAC gave Georgia legislators fortune cookies that read: "Georgia's fortune grows with immigrants and refugees — let's put an end to unwelcoming legislation."

In Florida, *SaintPetersBlog* [reports](#) that the State House unanimously passed the Florida GI bill, which expands the Education Dollars for Duty Program and will create a nonprofit corporation to encourage veterans to stay in Florida.

*Daily Kos* [examines](#) a proposed Tennessee law aimed at labor activists that would make mass picketing a misdemeanor in order to protect business' rights after the Volunteer States added 31,000 union members in the past year.

*Bluegrass Bulletin* [writes](#) that Kentucky must pass a medical marijuana bill in light of evidence that the drug provides clear health benefits to treat certain conditions, but many legislators are unwilling to do so because they believe it may hurt them politically. *Rothenblog* [asks](#) why the national media has not reported on the actual effects of Bill Clinton's recent trip to Kentucky for Senate candidate Alison Lundergan Grimes campaign in spite of the massive coverage of the his stop in the Bluegrass State.

In Arkansas, *Daily Kos* [denounces](#) Senator Mark Pryor's online petition to raise the state's minimum wage to \$8.50 an hour by 2017 while simultaneously fighting the measure that would raise the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. *Arkansas Blog* [reports](#) that while the Texas Textbook War over evolution ended in a resounding victory for science, the effects of the war have trickled down to Arkansas where charter schools have been able to bypass the board of education to use textbooks that include creationist rhetoric.

*Cottonmouth* [writes](#) that the director of the Mississippi Baptists Convention-affiliated Christian Action Commission is pressuring legislators to pass a bill similar to the one recently vetoed in Arizona that would have allowed religious business owners to deny service to gay customers.

In Texas, *RedState* [reports](#) that Ted Cruz won big in Texas this week, as four out of the five candidates he endorsed won their races and the fifth is the favorite to win in a runoff election. *Bluedaze* [details](#) the struggles of the people in Denton to live with large amounts of fracking near their city, which has culminated in a campaign to put fracking within city limits to a vote.

## Midwest

On Saturday, *Caffeinated Politics* [reports](#) on Wisconsin Republican Assembly Leader Bill Kramer who is likely to resign his leadership over allegations that he sexually harassed two women at a GOP fundraiser in Washington DC. They say that Kramer's election 'pro-family' position obviously 'fell into the ditch' when he went to Washington

DC. Still in the Badger State, *Uppity Wisconsin* [writes](#) on Monday that Governor Scott Walker has ‘thrown’ some of the state’s mentally ill off of the state’s version of Medicaid, in the name of balancing the state budget. Still on Governor Walker, *Blue Cheddar* [looks](#) into what looks to be local newspapers self-censoring negative stories about the recent email scandal involving the Governor.

Over in Indiana, *Indy Democrat* [takes](#) a close look at the state’s House races for this year’s mid-term elections, with some being ‘busier’ than others.

## **West and Pacific**

With other Western states like Washington and Colorado now having legalized marijuana, some commentators look to California to be next. *Caffeinated Politics* [looks](#) at a recent statement on the issue from Governor Jerry Brown. He says that legalization could have negative effects, and wants to wait and see how things turn out in the states that have legalized the drug. Still in California, *Capitol Alert* [reports](#) that embattled State Senator Ron Calderon has now taken a leave of absence from the Senate. Calderon is currently under the cloud of an FBI investigation and had been indicted by a grand jury on 24 felony counts.

On Saturday, Denver’s *The Spot* [says](#) that Governor John Hickenlooper will don a red and white striped hat this week to read a Dr Seuss book to school children as part of the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Read Across America Day. Also in Colorado, *PeakPolitics* [says](#) that Denver should be selected to host the 2016 Republican National Convention, and gives reasons why the other finalist cities should not be selected.

*WyoFile* [reports](#) on Wednesday that same-sex couples in Wyoming have filed a lawsuit in the state court challenging the state’s laws that prohibit same-sex couples from marrying, and refuse to respect the marriages of same-sex couples from other states.

On Monday, *Roll Call* [looks](#) at Hawaii’s competitive Democratic Primary race, for the upcoming special Senate election, which they say is unusual as the two Democrats are battling to brag about who has closer ties to Capitol Hill.

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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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