

A new strategy in eastern Europe, the Medicaid gap has a body count, and no, Elizabeth Warren is not running for President – US national blog round up for 19 – 25 April

USApp Managing Editor, Chris Gilson, and Assistant Editor, Natalie Allen, look at the best in political blogging from the Beltway. Our round-up of state blogs will follow on Saturday afternoon.

The Democratic Party, the GOP and elections

Last week's armed standoff between federal marshals and Nevada rancher, Cliven Bundy, over 20 years of unpaid grazing fees featured prominently in the national discussion this week. On Friday, *United Liberty* [calls](#) Senator Harry Reid a "jackass" for dismissing Bundy simply as a domestic terrorist, rather than examining the issues at the heart of the case. Fox News and many Republicans came out in support of Bundy's stand against the federal government, but many quickly backtracked after Bundy made comments indicating that he believes black people were better off under slavery. *The American Prospect* [writes](#) that Republicans are now reaping what they have sown; while they may not necessarily share Bundy's views on race, their rhetoric has made the GOP a natural home for racists.

Turning to the upcoming midterm elections, *Roll Call* [reports](#) on the March fundraising numbers, which left Democrats with \$40 million in their war chest and Republicans with \$31 million. Also on the subject of fundraising, *The Lonely Conservative* [criticizes](#) the Democrat's billionaire donor Tom Steyer for the recent misconduct of his former hedge funds, Farallon Capital Partners, and calls the Democrats hypocrites for their support of Steyer after their vocal protests of the Koch Brothers and Mitt Romney. *National Journal* [writes](#) that whichever side wins the Senate in November should not get too comfortable because structural changes in voters' behavior have ushered in the era of the small majority, which they theorize will only increase polarization and campaign spending, while further reducing productivity.

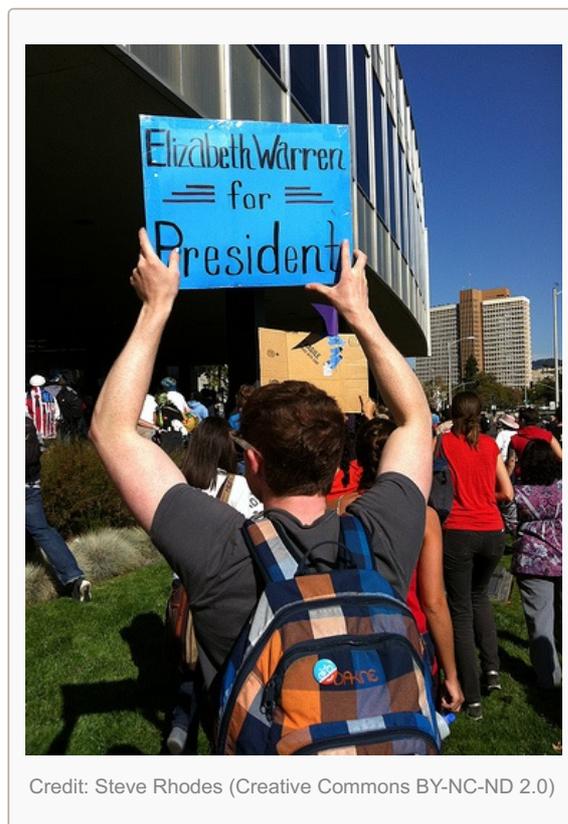
Moving to the 2016 election, *Outside the Beltway* reports that Elizabeth Warren has once again stated that she will not be running for president in 2016, [saying](#) that Warren is not acting like someone who wants to run for president and, for the time being, it looks like we will see her in the Senate through 2018.

FreakOutNation [asks](#) what you are if you plagiarize from a plagiarist, after a BuzzFeed report revealed that at least 8 Republicans have directly copied from Rand Paul's platform. Paul has come under fire over the past year for plagiarizing a speech from Wikipedia.

Outside the Beltway also [looks at](#) the GOP war over marriage equality, writing that the party is shifting on the issue, although it does not look like any red state legislature will legalize same sex marriage in the near future, political forces are already pushing the Republicans towards a wide acceptance of same sex marriage.

Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda

On Saturday, *The Foundry* [writes](#) that the government could solve America's jobs problem by: getting out of the way of the



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Keystone XL Pipeline, eliminating wage rules that add to businesses' costs, and cutting regulation that harms businesses.

PoliticusUSA [writes](#) that Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, who they believe may be the worst Justice in the Supreme Court's history, committed sedition when he told law students at the University of Tennessee that people should revolt if taxes in the U.S. become too high.

On Sunday, *Brennan Center for Justice* [advocates](#) that Obama to create a National Commission on Mass Incarceration to investigate and propose solutions on mass incarceration, as LBJ's Kerner Commission did on the subject of urban riots in 1967.

Roll Call [looks at](#) the pressure on Obama to address job bias against LGBT individuals through an executive order for federal contractors in the same way he raised the minimum wage for these workers in January.

Back at *The Foundry*, on Monday they [write](#) that congressmen are trying to sneak amnesty for immigrants into the National Defense Authorization Act, with a clause that would provide illegal immigrants with a path to citizenship if they serve in the U.S. army, arguing that this provision would encourage more illegal immigration of children and unacceptable security concerns.

Foreign policy and defense

Looking at Eastern Europe, *Crooks and Liars* [reports](#) that U.S. ground troops are being deployed to Poland as part of a NATO expansion in the region. *The Left Coaster* [praises](#) Obama's "clear-eyed view of Putin" with his new strategy of containment rather than cooperation. On Monday, *Hit & Run Blog* [looks at](#) Vice President Joe Biden's trip to Ukraine, writing that topics to be discussed will include the upcoming presidential election, U.S. security assistance commitments, and a ramping up of Ukraine's domestic energy production.

With nearly 90 percent of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal safely out of the country, *Outside the Beltway* [asks](#) if Obama should get credit for this positive development, which some would argue was the product of the threat of military action and others would say was the happy result of his previous bungling.

Turning back to the 2014 midterms, *Roll Call* [examines](#) how Obama's mixed record on foreign policy will impact the upcoming elections, arguing that his falling approval on the subject could harm the vulnerable Democrats in November.

Affordable Care

The Political Carnival takes a historical view of the Affordable Care Act this week, [writing](#) that every step to build the social safety net has been met with anger on the right, and looks at an interview with historian Harvey J. Kaye on the backlash from FDR's New Deal.

Moving back to present day, *Perspectives* [looks at](#) the projected death rate due to the Medicaid gap in states that have refused the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion, writing the refusal may be the "greatest act of political spite in modern American history."

The economy and society

On Monday, *Perspectives* [looks at](#) the \$500 billion discrepancy in the taxes owed the U.S. government and those collected since 1998, arguing that the gap was created by the Republic Party's efforts to gut the IRS in the 1990s



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and that it will only get worse as the agency has faced funding cuts for the past four years.

To receive Medicaid, most recipients are forbidden from having a savings of more than a few thousand dollars. *Workblog* [investigates](#) how this provision forces millions living with long term disabilities, injuries, and chronic illness into a permanent tenuous financial situation. They say that this may change, as the U.S. Congress has shown that it is still capable of some degree of bipartisanship, and is expected to pass the ABLE Act to address this issue.

Outside the Beltway reports that all but four of the same-sex marriage bans across the nation are now being challenged in court, and that number is expected to drop to three in the near future. They [write](#) that we could see the Supreme Court pick up one of the recent cases before the Circuit Court of Appeals, which could result in a decision on state same-sex marriage bans as early as June 2015.

Staying on the subject of the Supreme Court, after the Court's decision on *Schuette v Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action*, *The Atlantic* [argues](#) that the original impetus behind affirmative action, compensation for the victims of race-based oppression, is no longer relevant, as the U.S. is now a country that is far more divided on the grounds of class rather than race.

And finally...

A photo from 1914 shows that the Boston Braves wore swastikas on their cap in a season opener against the Brooklyn Dodgers. *Outside the Beltway* [explains](#) that before swastikas were associated with the Nazis, they were thought to bring good luck and were often featured sportswear.

FreakOutNation [reports](#) that a Rhode Island man attempted to arm a convenience store and a dry cleaner with a potato that he pretended was a gun. The suspect is still at large.

Crooks and Liars [writes](#) that some white supremacists ruined Easter egg hunts in Oakdale, California and Henrico, Virginia, by leaving eggs with notes promoting their racist ideas en lieu of candy.

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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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