

Cuomo the ‘proractionary’, Virginia facing shutdown, and is the GOP still the law & order party? – US state blog round up for 12 – 18 April

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

Northeast

This week *Daily Kos* [reported](#) that New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie’s had taken a further hit in the ongoing ‘Bridgagate’ scandal, as newly released documents that showed him as being interested in the pay details of a newly hired Port Authority official belie his earlier claims that he was not a ‘micromanager’. As the week continued, *Crooks & Liars* [reported](#) that an investigation has uncovered that Christie’s pending deal to award an \$300 million pension management contract to a hedge fund may be in violation of state anti-corruption laws.

Governor of neighboring New York State Andrew Cuomo, also came under some criticism from *Daily Kos* this week, as they [compared](#) his recent tactics against his political rivals to those of Christie, including public investigations, and taking control of their funds. *The Atlantic* [writes](#) on Tuesday that New York Democrats have turned against Cuomo, as he has embraced traditionally conservative policies such as tax cuts and skepticism of labor unions, dubbing him a ‘proractionary’. Staying in the Empire State, *Roll Call’s At the Races*, [writes](#) on Tuesday that Congressman Michael Grimm raised \$346,000 in first quarter of 2014, despite threatening to throw a reporter off a balcony after the State of the Union address in January. Also in New York news this week, the *Brennan Centre for Justice* [reported](#) that the New York Police Department has announced that it will disband its Demographics Unit which maps Muslim communities in the city, and sends undercover officers into mosques, restaurants and neighborhoods to gather information.

Moving to Vermont, *The Political Carnival* [ponders](#) on Wednesday, whether or not the Green Mountain State will be able to ‘pull off’ establishing a single payer healthcare system, which is being pushed for by Governor Peter Shumlin.

South

Crooks & Liars [reports](#) on Saturday that a Virginia Congressional candidate, Republican, Bob Marshall, has argued against abortion exceptions for incest, claiming that it can be voluntary. They say that there should be a minimum ethical standard to run for office, and that if there were, then Marshall would be disqualified from office in light of these comments. Staying in the Old Dominion State, *National Journal* looks at the potential for the state’s government to shut down in the same way the federal government did in October last year. They [write](#) that the Democratic controlled state Senate passed a budget this week, which would include federal funding for Obamacare and for a Medicaid expansion. The GOP-controlled House of Delegates has rejected the plan, meaning that unless an agreement is reached by July, the state government may shut down.

On Saturday, *Occasional Planet* [reports](#) on the latest tactics from Florida Republicans to suppress voting in the Sunshine State – stopping voters in long lines from using the bathroom while they wait.

Moving to Louisiana, *PoliticusUSA* [writes](#) on Thursday that the GOP has violated the Constitution as the state House voted this week to retain a law that bans oral sex and sodomy between gay and straight couples whether they are married or single. They say that Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal is a firm believer in Biblical law, and is notorious for using taxpayer’s money to push his religious agenda, such as shifting money to private Christian schools.

In the Magnolia state of Mississippi, *Perspectives* [writes](#) on Thursday that ahead of the Republican Senate Primary, the state's GOP still has links to neo-Confederates.

On Tuesday, *Kansas Watchdog* [writes](#) that it is time for increased transparency for the state's government and legislative process, after proposals for online broadcasts of every public meeting in the Capitol. They say that the potential \$178,000 cost of the initiative, should be considered to be an investment for than an expense.

Midwest

In Ohio, *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) that a federal judge has ruled that Ohio must recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states (though his order has been held pending appeal), interestingly without any nod to the Constitution's Full Faith and Credit Clause, which requires states to recognize the validity of laws and judicial actions of other states. A section to the Defense of Marriage Act that was not struck down by the Supreme Court appears to create an exception with same-sex marriage, but has yet to be applied in court.

On Saturday, *FreakOutNation* [decries](#) Iowa Governor Terry Branstad's recent proclamation, which declares July 14, 2014 be a day of "thoughtful prayer and humble repentance according to II Chronicles 7:14" for all Iowans that choose to join, to be a violation of the constitutional separation of church and state.

Uppity Wisconsin looks at Governor Scott Walker's decision to sign his property tax relief bill at Horsens Homestead Farms, [arguing](#) that is the perfect choice to highlight Walker's tax policy; the Horsens already receive a significant amount of tax relief and government subsidies, are within the top ten percent of agri-businesses, and are going to receive an even better deal under Walker at the expense of the middle class.

The mayor of Warren, Michigan, banned an atheist group from setting up a "Reason Station" in City Hall, over fears that they would upset Christians visiting the already installed "Prayer Station" there. *Outside the Beltway* [dissects](#) the constitutional issues in the case, and calls for the mayor to take a remedial Civics class. Staying in Michigan, after recent CBO reports and anecdotes about the successes of the Affordable Care Act, U.S. Senate candidate Terri Lynn Land's campaign, which has focused largely on the unpopular law, may be in trouble. On Monday, *Eclipticblog* [writes](#) that Land is faltering and on the defensive, and predicts that her opponent's five point lead will only grow, as Land's new pet issue appears to be opposition to wage equality for women.

In North Dakota, a federal judge struck down a state law that would have banned abortion as early as six weeks into the pregnancy. *PoliticoUSA* [says](#) that the ruling is unlikely to stop similar efforts from Tea Party Republicans in other states, but praises the ruling as "a reminder to anti-choice lawmakers that the laws they pass are unconstitutional and that they will be struck down in court."

West and Pacific

In Wyoming, *WyoFile* [calls](#) for the Equality State to be on the right side of history with regard to same sex marriage, expressing optimism after former Senator Alan Simpson, a Republican, explained on TV why he supports marriage equality.

On Saturday, *FreakOutNation* [reports](#) that a new vending machine for marijuana edibles was put on display in Colorado. The machine has already been referred to as the future of weed, will only be usable for those with medical marijuana cards.

In Nevada, local rancher Cliven Bundy called for a protest of the Bureau of Land Management who rounded-up nearly 400 of his cows that he had been illegally sending to graze on protected land. Bundy currently owes \$1 million to the US government for 20 years of unpaid grazing fees and the protest quickly became tense as armed militia members joined the protest, forcing the US Marshals to stand down. *Nevada Progressive* weighed in on the conflict, [writing](#) that the Tea Party fuelled this escalation and the GOP is no longer the "law & order party." *Perspectives* [criticizes](#) the state's Republican leadership for standing by Bundy in the standoff with the BLM, saying that they have helped to create an environment where the federal government loses around \$500 billion a year to tax fraud, evasion, and underreporting.

Hit & Run Blog looks at California's economic recovery, [arguing](#) that much of the apparent success is due to

Governor Jerry Brown's use of "cash-based budgeting," which includes borrowed money as a revenue and only counts expenses when cash changes hands; the use of this system has left billions of dollars of debt off of the balance sheet.

And in Hawaii, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [praises](#) two bills in front of the state legislature to reform the Aloha State's lax lobbying laws, writing that while most measures to boost government transparency died this term, the lobbying bills seem likely to pass.

Please read our comments policy before commenting.

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.

Shortened URL for this post: <http://bit.ly/1kM50mA>

- CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 2014 LSE USAPP