

## Vermont sidesteps McCutcheon v. FEC, South Carolina's mammoth problem, and how did the GOP hijack Arizona? US state blog round up for 29 March – 4 April

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

### Northeast

On Sunday, *Crooks & Liars* [says](#) that those who are defending New Jersey Governor Chris Christie over allegations that access to Hurricane Sandy recovery relief funds for Hoboken Mayor, Dawn Zimmer, were made contingent on them endorsing Christie for reelection last year, are 'ridiculously lame', given apparent errors in their accounts over alleged conversations on the relief funds. Meanwhile, *The Feed* [writes](#) that Chris Christie's real crisis is not this or his 'Bridgewater' scandal, but the fact that he is cutting \$94 million from the state's pension contributions as part of nearly \$700 million in spending cuts. They say the fact that this will make pension costs higher in later years, meaning that ratings agencies are becoming nervous about the state's economic outlook.

Over in New York, *The Lonely Conservative* [reports](#) that New York City Mayor, Bill de Blasio, was booed as he threw the first pitch at Citi field.

In Connecticut, *Crooks & Liars* [reports](#) that state gun safety laws, in the form of a two week waiting period, were successful in preventing a school shooting massacre, after 18-year old Natalie Carpenter was arrested for making threats to conduct shootings in two local high schools.

On Monday, *RIFuture* [wonders](#) if Rhode Island is finally ready to tackle climate change. They say that while neighbors Massachusetts and Connecticut have both passed climate change legislation, efforts at similar legislation in the Ocean State have largely fallen flat.

Over in Vermont, *VTDigger* [reports](#) that the state has been able to sidestep this week's ruling from the Supreme Court on campaign contributions. They say that the state's legislature approved new campaign finance rules earlier this year, which also include an 'escape clause' for a cap on aggregate limits in the law.

### South

On Saturday, *Red State* reports that Maryland's \$125.5 million state healthcare insurance exchange is 'broken beyond repair', and that Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown has refused to apologize for the failure. They [say](#) that the state now has to set up a new database, and ensure that it is compliant with state regulations, as well as reintegrate the existing records with the new ones, which will all cost.

Meanwhile, in South Carolina, *Crooks & Liars* [reported](#) this week that a child's proposal to make the woolly mammoth the state's official fossil has run into trouble as Republican legislators have proposed an amendment to the subsequent bill that would include a Biblical passage explaining the creation of life.

Moving to the Peach State, *United Liberty* [looks](#) at efforts in Georgia by Republicans to fight Obamacare and the overreach of the federal government.

In Florida, *Roll Call's At the Races* [looks](#) at the upcoming special election to succeed former GOP Representative Trey Radel. With the primary on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, they say that former state Representative Paige Kreegel has already started pushing his candidacy on local television.

On Tuesday, *Daily Kos* [reports](#) that last year, the Governor of Tennessee, Bill Haslam, threatened that it would no

longer provide \$300 million in subsidies to Volkswagen if its workforce was to unionize.

In Mississippi, *Crooks & Liars* [writes](#) on Wednesday that the state has been among the first to adopt religious freedom legislation, after lawmakers passed a bill that states that state and local government cannot put a burden on religious practices.

Moving to the Old Dominion State, *Blue Virginia* [wrote](#) this week that the state GOP's refusal to expand Medicaid may be resulting in between 260 and over 900 'needless deaths' every year. They write that the state's opt-out for the nearly 300,000 that qualify is bordering on 'pure evil'.

## Midwest

On Monday, *National Journal* [reports](#) that the Wisconsin state legislature may be on the verge of expelling one of its members for the first time in nearly 100 years. They say that GOP Representative, Bill Kramer, has been accused of groping and sexually harassing two women and has no intention of leaving office early, meaning that the state Assembly is considering its possible options against him.

In North Dakota, *SayAnythingBlog* [writes](#) that the state's Democrats have wrapped up their annual convention by criticizing the state's dependence on oil and a potential ban on firearms sales. They say that these policy points show how out of touch the party is with most North Dakotans, especially given how beneficial oil development has been to incomes in the state.

In Michigan, *Eclectablog* [writes](#) on Monday that the state's Republican Party is continuing its attack on labor, by stripping funding for training courses at Michigan State University if they continue to be offered to members of building trades unions.

Over in the Prairie State, *Progress Illinois* [writes](#) on Wednesday that the state is set to get a \$22 million grant from the U.S Department of Education to turn around its persistently low achieving schools.

## West and Pacific

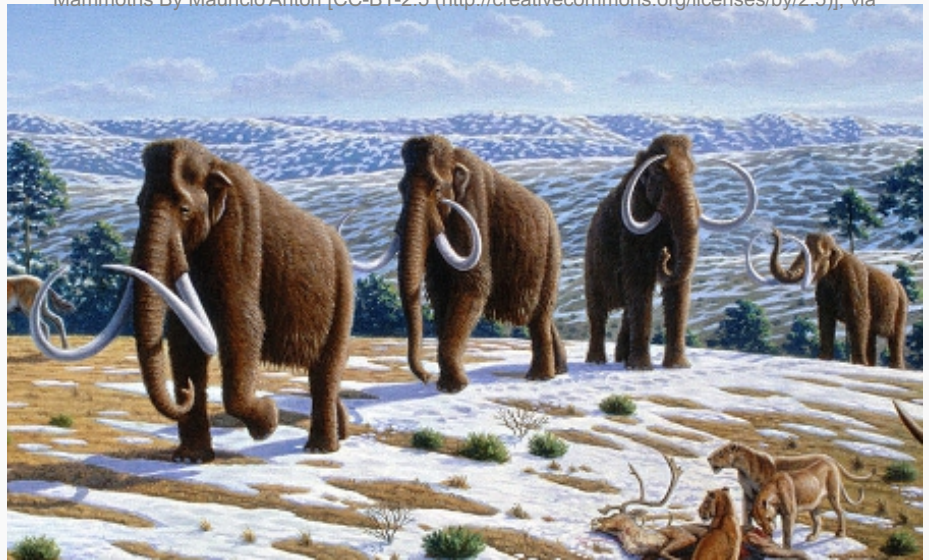
On Monday, *National Journal* [looks](#) at how the right has 'hijacked' Arizona. They say that the state's clean elections law, passed in 1998, which allowed for public financing of campaigns, along with term limits, have meant that the state's legislature has become largely controlled by the GOP.

Last week saw California State Senator Leland Yee arrested for arms smuggling. On Tuesday, *Hit & Run* [wonders](#) why he is not yet a household name – potentially it is because he is a Democrat. Still in California, *Capitol Alert* [says](#) that in Congressional elections, its ballots give candidates the ability to be creative in how they describe themselves.

In the Beaver State, *Blue Oregon* [writes](#) that the debate on the minimum wage has arrived once again, after activists in Portland staged a rally in favor of a \$15 per hour rate earlier this month. They say that the questions over what the right minimum wage for Portland should be are hard ones, but that it's time to grapple with them.

At Montana's *Preserve the Beavertooth Front*, they [ask](#) what Australia knows that the state does not, as over there energy companies have signed pledges only to drill if landowners agree. In Montana, however, mineral rights are

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separate from surface rights, and have preference.

Washington State saw a terrible mudslide that killed at least 30 in the town of Oso. On Tuesday, *Strange Bedfellows* [reports](#) that Governor Jay Inslee has made a second request to the federal government for more disaster assistance money.

In Hawaii, *Honolulu Civil Beat* writes on Tuesday that state lawmakers are currently debating a minimum wage increase to \$10 per hour by 2018, but questions remain over how much employers can deduct from these wages for workers who rely on tips.

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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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