

## Democrats meddle in New Jersey, budget battles continue in Virginia, and will Michigan split its ticket? – US state blog round up for 24 – 30 May

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

### Northeast

This week *Daily Kos* has two interesting stories from New Jersey. First, up they say that the Governor of the Garden State, Chris Christie, is taking aim at his ‘favorite target’, the state’s workers, by reducing a scheduled payment to the state pension fund from \$1.6 billion to \$696 million. They [say](#) that he is taking money away from public workers, when he could be taxing the wealthy a small amount more. On Tuesday, they look at New Jersey’s Republican primary for the state’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District. They [say](#) that the state’s Democratic Party is ‘meddling’ in the primary race by attacking both GOP candidates in this week’s primary, subtly encouraging voters to choose Steve Lonegan, as the Democratic candidate, Aimee Belgard, has more chance of beating him than rival Tom MacArthur in the open seat.

Moving to the Empire State, in New York this week, *Capitol Confidential* [reports](#) that GOP gubernatorial candidate Rob Astorino has stated that if elected, he would send a bill to the state legislature that would seek eight-year term limits for elected officials, in order to encourage ‘new faces and fresh ideas’.

On Sunday, Pennsylvania’s *raging chicken press* [reports](#) that State Senator John Eichelberger recently commented that fellow Republican Mike Fleck, one of only two openly gay representatives in the legislature, and currently worried that he may lose his seat, would not be in difficulty if he had not revealed his sexuality.

In Rhode Island, *Nesi’s Notes* [looks](#) at the history of the Rhode Island economy, saying that the state’s current difficulties are reminiscent of those experienced in the Ocean State for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

On Sunday in Vermont, *VT Digger* [reports](#) that the Green Mountain State’s Republican Party is gearing up for a ‘ground war’ with the state’s Democrats, and are running 74 candidates (36 are new), in an attempt to retake the Statehouse this fall. They say that Democrats have held a 2/3 majority of the Vermont House since 2009, and that the GOP will focus on high property taxes on the failures of the state’s Obamacare health insurance system.

### South

*Daily Kos* [reports](#) that late last week a Republican member of Virginia’s state house wants to impeach the Old Dominion State’s Attorney General, Mark Herring, for his refusal to defend the state’s same-sex marriage ban. They say that most Virginia Republicans have little interest in impeaching an attorney general who is following through on his campaign promises and doing something that is being done in several other states. Staying in Virginia, *Decision Virginia* [reports](#) on Thursday that the state is still approaching an unprecedented government shutdown, and that more than 100,000 state workers would be left without paychecks if the budget battle is not resolved within the next thirty days.

Moving south to South Carolina, *Informed Comment* [reports](#) that the president of a bible college was charged last week with treating foreign students essentially as slaves, by forcing them to work with little or no pay.

*Tennessee Watchdog* [warns](#) this week that the state’s Democrats have a history of using partisan politics to keep the state’s judiciary under their control. They say that Democrats are using the unproven threat of the GOP making use of outside money to help their campaign in order to fundraise for themselves.

On Tuesday, *Daily Kos* [reports](#) that the Supreme Court ruled this week that Florida could no longer use specific IQ scores to determine whether or not their mental capacities were high enough for them to be executed.

This week *RedState* [says](#) that in Texas, things are looking 'pretty grim' for the opponents of the Tea Party, after GOP primaries that saw conservative candidates beat establishment Republicans, were held in the Lone Star State. They also write that 740,000 turned out for the GOP runoff, while 180,000 did for the Democrats' runoff. Still in Texas, *Burnt Orange Report* [writes](#) on Thursday that the two

candidates for the Texas governorship, Democrat State Senator, Wendy Davis and Attorney General Greg Abbott, have agreed to two debates. They say that this follows Davis' proposal for six debates, which Abbott swiftly declined.

## Midwest

In the Buckeye State this week, *Hit & Run* [reports](#) that Ohio is taking a major step in curbing the use of solitary confinement for juveniles. They say that the state's Department of Youth Services has agreed with the federal government to reduce and eventually eliminate the practice which is often used for young offenders with mental illness.

On Wednesday, *National Review's The Agenda*, [comments](#) on the recent Detroit Blight Removal task Force's demolition report that proposes demolishing more than 40,000 buildings in the city. They say that the plan is all about spending money without making choices, and that the areas targeted for blight intervention are nowhere near the areas that are 'hanging on or coming back'. Staying in the Great Lakes State, *Smart Politics* [wonders](#) on Thursday whether or not Michigan will [split its ticket](#) in November. They say that if current momentum holds, then GOP incumbent Rick Snyder will be reelected as Governor, while the state's open Senate seat may go to Democrat Gary Peters. They say that this will be somewhat unusual as Michigan voters have split their vote in this way 1/3 of the time in the past century.

Meanwhile, *Outside the Beltway* [writes](#) that the Minnesota legislature recently held a special session where it repealed nearly 1,200 outdated and unnecessary laws. It is now legal to drive a car in neutral in the North Star state, and no longer a crime to carry fruit in an illegally sized container. They say that this is a good idea for other state legislatures, and even Congress as well.

Moving west to North Dakota, *SayAnythingblog* [writes](#) on Tuesday that Democratic State Representative, Josh Boschee is confident that the state's ant-gay marriage laws will see a legal challenge soon. North Dakota is the only state left that has such laws on the books that remain unchallenged.

In Missouri this week, *PoliticMO* [writes](#) that Democratic Governor Jay Nixon has gone on the offensive after the legislature made efforts to expand the state's tax incentive code on the final day of session. Nixon is concerned that the \$776 million move has thrown away the balance of the budget, and may well veto the bills containing the incentive language.

## West and Pacific



On Monday, *Crooks & Liars* [says](#) that COP Congressional candidate for California's 25<sup>th</sup> District, Tom Strickland, was sending our robo-calls stating his commitment to the second amendment, at the same time as a student from the University of California, Santa Barbara shot over a dozen people, and killed six. Staying in the Golden State, *Capital & Main* [writes](#) on Tuesday that a new law is being considered in the state legislature that would hold companies accountable for the violations of workers' rights committed by the firms that supply them with temporary labor. They say that companies such as Walmart are increasingly relying on outsourced labor, and then are not held responsible for low wages or lack of employee benefits.



Missouri Governor Jay Nixon Credit: MoDOT Photos (Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Moving to Nevada, *The Foundry* [reports](#) that the Silver state has given up on its \$91 million Obamacare exchange with the federal government now set to spend even more to transfer the state exchange (and its more than 45,000 enrollees) to the healthcare.gov system.

In Colorado this week, *ColoradoPols* [looks](#) at the state Republican Party's long term dilemma, that the party tends to be successful at midterm elections such as this year, but less so in presidential elections, when far more people turn out to vote. They say that the state's Democrats may be able to break the GOP's potential 'wave' in the state this year by driving home the message of the GOP's extremism and incompetence.

At the beginning of the year, SeaTac, a suburb of Seattle, instituted a \$15 minimum wage for certain service industry employees. *United Liberty* [writes](#) that employees are already seeing the negative effects of the wage hike, as some businesses are closed; workers have seen benefit cuts, and some firms have given more work to managers.

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