

New York's election woes, Wisconsin's Walker probe, and Idaho fights to ban same-sex marriage- US state blog round up for 3 – 9 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

In Massachusetts, *Hit & Run* [writes](#) on Monday that the Bay State is to scrap its broken \$179 million health insurance exchange. They say that the exchange has been one of the country's most troubled, and state officials now plan to buy a working off-the-rack system that they can customize; or join the federal exchange system if that does not work. Meanwhile, *The Feed* [writes](#) that Massachusetts has the worst state pension system in the country. They say that the system does not encourage workers to delay taking retirement payments by working longer, and that workers don't start earning a pension until they have been employed for at least ten years,

In New Jersey this week, *Crooks & Liars* [looks](#) at the author of a new book on Governor Chris Christie "*Ruthless Ambition: The Rise and Fall of Chris Christie*". In it, Louis Manzo rails against abuses by Christie's prosecutors, which is not surprising, as Manzo himself has been a target of Christie in the recent past.

Moving over to the Empire State, *Hit & Run* [reports](#) on a bizarre raid by the New York Police Department on the home of a long dead man. They say that the raids may actually be a cover for the NYPD to detain the dead man's son, James Jordan, Jr, even though they have no evidence to arrest him. On Tuesday, *Caffeinated Politics* says that New York's Mayor, Bill de Blasio 'could have been classier' to his former boss, Congressman Charlie Rangel, at a recent affordable housing rally, even though he did not endorse him in last year's mayoral race. Still in New York, the *Brennan Center for Justice* looks at why



Bill de Blasio Credit: Kevin Case (Creative Commons BY)

the state's elections are stuck in the 20th century – New York is 47th in the country for voter registration. They [say](#) that a new bill to modernize New York elections, the Voter Empowerment Act of New York (which would expand online voter registration), was voted down by the State Senate Elections Committee.

In Pennsylvania this week, *PoliticsPA* [writes](#) that the Keystone State's Republican Governor Tom Corbett will not appeal the state Supreme Court's injunction against a controversial voter ID law.

South

This week in Alabama, *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) that the Chief Justice of the state's Supreme Court has stated that the First Amendment only applies to Christians.

Moving to Oklahoma, *Crooks & Liars* [writes](#) that after last week's botched execution, the director of prisons in the state now wants an indefinite stop to all executions, so that procedures can be revised. Still in the Sooner State, *the Okie* [reports](#) on Thursday that the Oklahoma House has rejected an attempt to override Governor Mary Fallin's veto of a bill that would require hospitals to provide parents of newborns with information about whooping cough and the availability of a vaccine.

Outside the Beltway [writes](#) on a proposal in Virginia that would ban people from meeting in their own homes. They say that despite the fact there have been complaints about large groups gathering in homes in the past, this is not justification for the Fairfax County ordinance, as it is far too arbitrary in nature, and is likely to be unconstitutional.

In Maryland this week, *Monoblogue* [looks](#) at a recent poll that found that half of the state's residents would leave if they could. They say that five of the state's 23 counties lost population between 2010 and 2013, counties which had an unemployment rate higher than the state average. They say that GOP gubernatorial candidate for Governor, Larry Hogan, has seized on these figures to criticize the current Democratic Governor Martin O'Malley for the state's 'crushing taxes, fees, tolls and regulations'.

Moving down to the sunshine state of Florida, *StPetersBlog* [writes](#) on Monday that a new poll shows that 88 percent of Floridians support the legalization of medical marijuana, and that 53 percent support adults' possession of the drug in small amounts.

Midwest

This week in the Buckeye State, the *Ohio Daily* [gives](#) more reasons why State Representative, John Barnes (who is facing a primary) should be evicted from the State Legislature. They write that apart from being in hoc to anti-education forces, in previous employment at Cleveland City Hall, Barnes was moved positions due to charges of sexual harassment, as well as intimidating co-workers.

In Wisconsin, *Caffeinated Politics* [covers](#) this week's developments in the 'John Doe' probe into how special interest groups worked with the recall efforts of GOP Governor Scott Walker. They report on Thursday that a federal judge has halted an interim appeal by prosecutors in the case, which may now mean that a previous ruling requiring prosecutors to return the evidence they have collected and destroy all copies of it that they might have.

Moving to the North Star State of Minnesota, *Hit & Run* [reports](#) on Thursday that a new law, signed by the governor this week, now requires that citizens be

convicted of a crime before authorities engage in civil asset forfeiture. They say that the new measure will make that authorities will need to work harder to get convictions in order to seize obvious criminal assets such as drugs and guns.



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SayAnythingBlog [writes](#) on Monday that the state is a top destination from Minnesotans fleeing higher taxes. They say that a family of four who moved states might see a drop of 78 percent in their tax bill. Moving south, *South Dakota War College* reports that the Governor of the Mount Rushmore State, Dennis Daugaard has [announced](#) that the state has paid off its creditors early with a \$48 million bond payment.

In Missouri, *PoliticsMO* [writes](#) on Tuesday that the state legislature has overridden Democratic Governor Jay Nixon's veto of a \$620 million tax cut for businesses and individuals. They say that while last year Nixon and Democrats opposed to the bill benefitted from Republican infighting, this year the state GOP showed a united front in favor of the tax cut bill.

West and Pacific

In the Gem State this week, *Eye on Boise* [reports](#) that lawyers for the state argued that federal courts in ten other states were wrong when they overturned state bans on same-sex marriage as unconstitutional. They also urged a federal judge to uphold Idaho's ban. They say that the judge has taken arguments over whether or not same-sex couples constitute an 'ideal child-rearing environment' under advisement.

Moving South to California, *National Journal* [covers](#) what they say is one of the most interesting 2014 House candidates, Amanda Renteria, who has just released her first television ads, one in English, one in Spanish. They say that the state's 21st District, where Renteria is running, is the most heavily Hispanic Republican-held seat in the country. Still in the Golden State, *The Foundry* [writes](#) on Thursday that the recent announcement that Toyota will be moving a major headquarters to Texas is indicative of the state's uncompetitive tax and spending regime, something that many in California appear to be blind to. Meanwhile, *Hit & Run* [writes](#) on a dispute between San Francisco residents and tour buses. While buses were banned from the famous Alamo Square, the ban is hardly enforced by police, because it is so difficult to do so. Meanwhile, locals say that tour bus drivers are aggressive and streets too small to accommodate the often large buses.

In Alaska this week, *Daily Kos* [says](#) that a GOP candidate for Lieutenant Governor, Dan Sullivan, has given an apology for earlier comments comparing union dues to slavery. They say that despite his apology, Sullivan remains opposed to rules compelling mandatory union membership for certain work. Staying in Alaska, *The Mudflats* gives another 'Alaskan debunking', [writing](#) that the state's winters aren't actually as cold as many believe, the state is not covered with ice, and that national parks are not located in municipal areas.

The Foundry [writes](#) on Wednesday that state Senators in Hawaii are trying to push through a bill that would reauthorize discriminatory housing policies, which would provide special benefits to native Hawaiians. They say that federal law actually exempts the Aloha state from non-discrimination requirements of the Civil Rights Act, meaning that the government is authorizing (and paying for with taxpayer funds) Hawaii to engage in blatant discrimination by providing benefits to certain residents based on their ancestry.

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