


# Georgia fights Obamacare, minimum wage made meaningless in North Dakota, and tight polling in Colorado – US state blog round up for 28 June – 4 July

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 [blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2014/07/05/georgia-fights-obamacare-minimum-wage-made-meaningless-in-north-dakota-and-tight-polling-in-colorado-us-state-blog-round-up-for-28-june-4-july/](http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2014/07/05/georgia-fights-obamacare-minimum-wage-made-meaningless-in-north-dakota-and-tight-polling-in-colorado-us-state-blog-round-up-for-28-june-4-july/)

*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 saw New Jersey Governor Chris Christie sign the Garden State's budget for 2015, after debates about what to cut in order for the measure to be a balanced one. On Monday, prior to the budget's signing, *SaveJersey* has [four suggestions](#) for Christie to save money. These include abolishing municipality aid for cities like Newark, Trenton and Jersey City, cutting the Business Employment Incentive Program, eliminating government waste, and reforming legislative pay and benefits. New Jersey is often stereotyped as being one of the more corrupt states in the U.S., but on Friday, *Blue Jersey* [writes](#) that a new survey has found that the state ranks 31<sup>st</sup> in corruption.

There were budget debates in Pennsylvania as well this week. *PoliticsPA* [reports](#) on a poll of their readers that 80 percent believed that the Keystone State would miss its budget deadline this week, after Republican Governor Tom Corbett pledged not to consider new taxes unless pension reform and liquor privatization were considered. Meanwhile, *Raging Chicken Press* [says](#) that the most ridiculous item in the state's budget is the removal of \$30 million from volunteer fire companies.

On Wednesday, *Blue Mass Group* looks at how the Bay State can move closer towards a Single Payer health system, as neighboring Vermont is currently trying to do. They [say](#) that in Massachusetts, the commercial health insurance market would have to be replaced by a single payer system of at least \$7.5 billion, which would require an increase in tax revenues of 33 percent.

Moving to New Hampshire, *Granite Grok* expresses [dismay](#) at the state's Republican Party chair who has spoken out against the recently increased gas tax in the state, after several GOP state senators sponsored or voted for the bill.

## South

On Monday, *Red Maryland Network* [writes](#) that small business owners in the Old Line State have given the state a C- grading for its friendliness to business. They say that small businesses in the state pay the seventh highest marginal tax rates in the country.

Moving south to Kentucky, on Tuesday, *Daily Kos* [writes](#) that a Federal judge has ruled that the Bluegrass state's constitutional amendment banning gay marriage is invalid. They say that though the ruling is currently on hold, it is an important step.

*United Liberty* [writes](#) this week on Georgia's 'huge step' in its fight to block the implementation of Obamacare in the state. They say that the Georgia Health Care Freedom and ACA Noncompliance Act is now state law, and guarantees that state resources will not be used to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

In South Carolina, *The Shark Tank* [wonders](#) if incumbent Republican Senator Lindsey Graham is likely

to face a new opponent in the midterm election this fall. While he 'sailed' through his renomination in June, he may face a challenge from libertarian Thomas Ravenel, who is currently gathering the 10,000 signatures needed for him to appear on the ballot.

Last month incumbent Senator Thad Cochran defeated primary challenger Chris McDaniel in a closely fought Republican primary runoff in Mississippi. The election seems far from over, with *Red State* [writing](#) this week that Cochran, or someone close to him, may have illegally paid for votes by funneling money towards certain black pastors who will then promise a set number of votes. On Thursday, *Roll Call's At the Races* [writes](#) that McDaniel has offered a \$15,000 reward for any evidence of voter fraud in the election.



South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham Credit: John Orrell (Creative Commons BY)

Like Georgia to the east, Oklahoma is currently in the middle of a standoff with the federal government over the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. On Tuesday, *Wonkblog* [reports](#) that the federally funded Insure Oklahoma program will now be kept alive for another year, even though it had been threatened with closure after the state refused to align it with the requirements of Medicaid's expansion.

In the Lone Star State this week, *Burnt Orange Report* [looks](#) at why Dallas should hold the 2016 Republican National Convention. They argue that if the GOP comes to the solidly Democratic city, they will see the benefits of such control, as well as seeing Democrats' powerful infrastructure which will turn Texas into a battleground state.

## Midwest

On Tuesday, *Plunderbund* [looks](#) at Ohio's struggle for voting rights, after lawmakers removed the first week of in-person absentee voting and issued a directive banning voting on Sundays, evenings, and the Monday prior to Election Day. They say that the Ohio ACLU filed a lawsuit in May asking a federal court to strike down the law and the directive.

Moving to the Hoosier State, *Indy Politics* [writes](#) that the current stay filed by Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller on the ruling that the state's ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional has put the marriages of hundreds of people who gained licenses prior to the stay in 'limbo'.

In Illinois this week, *Progress Illinois* [writes](#) that a new law requires that children in the Prairie State will now be required to attend kindergarten at the age of 6 rather than 7, something that critics have said is an unfunded mandate for a state school system that has not been fully funded for the past several years.

On Sunday, *Outside the Beltway* [writes](#) that a supporter of Wisconsin's Republican Governor Scott Walker who is facing multiple charges of election fraud is now claiming amnesia as a defense. They say that the case is amusing as one of the most blatant cases of voter fraud has been committed by a member of the party that claims that voter fraud is a serious problem, despite the fact that it is in fact a small problem that has little ability to influence election outcomes.

Moving west to Minnesota, *Smart Politics* [wonders](#) on Saturday if incumbent Governor Mark Dayton

may be the only Democratic governor in the Midwestern region after this fall's midterm elections. They say that the GOP has the upper hand in most states, but Dayton's advantage is his ability to wait while Republicans in the North Star State go through a bitter fight for their party's gubernatorial nomination.

In North Dakota, *The Daily Signal* [writes](#) on Tuesday that the state has made the minimum wage meaningless, as entry level workers in the Peace Garden State enjoy wages around \$14 an hour – or nearly twice the current federal minimum. Staying in North Dakota, *SayAnythingblog* [warns](#) that despite the assertions of Democrats, the state's elections are still at risk of voter fraud as it is the only state in the country without voter registration. They argue that in the 2012 election, more than 10,000 ballots were cast based on unverified residency affidavits.

## **West and Pacific**

In the Centennial State this week, *ColoradoPols* [writes](#) that the state's Judicial Branch is not a political tool of the Colorado Legislative Branch. This is in reaction to an attempt by the State of Colorado to break its financial contracts, with its lawyers arguing that a pension contract does not exist, as well as taking a 'window of opportunity' to persuade state courts to permit the breach of contract. Staying in Colorado, *The Spot* [writes](#) on Tuesday that recent polls show tight races for the U.S. Senate and Governor positions in this fall's midterm elections. They say that incumbent Democratic Governor John Hickenlooper is neck and neck with GOP challenger Bob Beauprez, with both on 44 percent, and that Senator Mark Udall has a one point advantage over GOP challenger Cory Gardner.

Moving down to Arizona, *Blog for Arizona* [writes](#) on Thursday that the Grand Canyon State is lagging behind the country's economic recovery because of its ideologically extreme Tea Party legislature which puts blind faith in 'trickle down' economics. They say that Arizonans need to elect Democrats to office this fall in order to escape its current economic morass.

In the Golden State of California this week, *FlashReport* [writes](#) that outside of areas such as Silicon Valley and the Bay Area, the economic situation is mediocre to grim, with jobless rates of up to 21 percent. They say that Democrats in Sacramento have forgotten about these regions and that Californians cannot accept a status quo which has led to the nation's highest poverty rate and a growing deficit of opportunity. Finally, ahead of Friday's Independence Day celebrations, *Fox & Hounds* [looks](#) at how fireworks divide California. They say that laws covering the sale of fireworks differ from city to city, leading to a patchwork of sales and bans across the state, which reflect the political and economic divides between regions.

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