

Democrats make hay on impeachment talk, GOP border bill troubles, and Congress banned from Wikipedia edits – US national blog round up for 26 July – 1 August

USApp Managing Editor, Chris Gilson looks at the best in political blogging from the Beltway. Our round-up of state blogs will follow on Saturday afternoon.

The Democratic Party, the GOP and elections

This week saw the Republican Party bring a lawsuit against President Obama over his delay to the employer mandate of the Affordable Care Act. House Democrats have used the lawsuit, and the threats from some Republicans to impeach the president to their own ends. On Saturday, *The Lonely Conservative* [says](#) that every Republican in Washington DC has said that impeachment is not on the table, and yet Dan Pfeiffer, one of Obama's top advisers, has said that the President's likely significant executive action on immigration after the summer may well trigger the GOP to begin impeachment proceedings. On Wednesday, *Roll Call's At the Races* [says](#) that GOP talk of impeachment and the lawsuit has



Speaker of the House John Boehner Credit: Gage Skidmore (Creative Commons BY SA)

unleashed a 'flood' of donations to House Democrats – around \$7.6 million since the lawsuit was announced by Speaker John Boehner in early July. *The Atlantic* [looks](#) at the 21 emails that the Democratic Party has sent to supporters calling for donations to fight against potential impeachment proceedings and the lawsuit.

The *National Journal* writes this week on how the Democratic primary race for the Rhode Island candidate for governor is a window into the party's divisions. They [say](#) that state Treasurer Gina Raimondo, a champion of pension reform, is backed by hedge funds, and exemplifies the middle of the party with corporate ties, while Providence Mayor Angel Taveras is more in the mold of Elizabeth Warren, and has a more anti Wall Street view.

Taking the Republican view, on Monday *United Liberty* [says](#) that the White House and Democrats are the only ones pushing the idea of impeachment, in order to get their base out in an election year. Impeachment is not going to happen, they write. *PoliticusUSA* takes issue with this on Tuesday, saying that the logical conclusion of suing the President is impeachment, and that they will not rule it out. They also give a list of 17 GOP incumbents who do apparently support impeaching Obama. *The Daily Signal* also [looks](#) at the possibility of impeachment this week, saying that if conservatives try to impeach Obama, then he will have the last laugh, given that it is a Democratic fundraising ploy. Meanwhile, the *White House Dossier* wonders whether or not impeachment would be a bad thing for the GOP. They [say](#) that if President Obama does grant a 'pardon' to 5 million undocumented immigrants (acting against Congress' will), then this might be cause to launch impeachment proceedings.

Moving on to other Republican issues, *RedState* writes on Thursday that it is [inexcusable](#) that House Republican leaders will only allow a vote to prohibit the expansion of Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program which grants deportation relief, after the House votes to approve new funding of \$659 million to curb the

flow of child migrants to the U.S. border.

Outside the Beltway [writes](#) this week that the recent *Hobby Lobby* Supreme Court decision over exemptions to Obamacare's contraceptive mandate may be working against Republicans. They report that a new poll shows that 57 percent female voters would be more likely to vote for a candidate who opposed the *Hobby Lobby* decision. They say that this fits in with the GOP's long standing problems with female voters, which have meant that the gender gap has become a decisive factor in recent elections.

On Thursday, *Daily Kos* takes a [look](#) at the potential candidates for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016. They say that current New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie is still a 'top tier' hopeful not only because it seems that no smoking gun has emerged from his 'Bridgegate' scandal, but also because the rest of the GOP's 2016 field 'absolutely sucks'.

On Wednesday, the *Brennan Centre for Justice* reports on its new analysis of competitive House districts for this year's midterm elections. They [say](#) there has been an explosion in spending from outside groups, and much of this is from 'dark money' sources, which do not reveal their sources, and super PACs, which offer large donors a way of avoiding federal contribution limits. They say that total outside spending in the 13 most competitive House districts adds up to \$5.3 million this year. Meanwhile, *Daily Kos* [says](#) that this year more than \$2 billion on political ads will be spent, though these large amounts seem to be doing little to change the minds of voters.

Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda

On Monday, *The Daily Signal* looks at whether or not the House of Representatives is able to sue President Obama for not executing the law. They [say](#) that typically the courts are reluctant to referee disputes between Congress and the executive branch, but that Speaker John Boehner is arguing that the House can sue because harm is being done to the general welfare and faithful execution of laws, and that no legislative remedies exist. *PoliticusUSA* reports on Wednesday that the House voted in 227-195 in favor of suing President Obama. They [say](#) that lawsuit is doomed, and a diversion as House Republicans do not want the country to see the horrible job that they have done of governing.

On Tuesday, *The Daily Signal* says that the Export-Import Bank, already under fire from Congress, is now under a House subcommittee's microscope over allegations of fraud and corruption. They [say](#) that the agency, under threat of closure from Republicans, faces allegations of kickbacks and gifts for officials and attempts to steer federal contracts to favored companies.

On Thursday, *Daily Kos* [reports](#) that the Central Intelligence Agency has admitted that it conducted an unauthorized search of the files of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, which had been used to compile a report on the CIA's torture program. They say that CIA Director John Brennan has apologized for the agency's actions, a turnaround from his statement in March that the alleged spying and hacking did not occur.

This week, *RedState* [bemoaned](#) the House's 'fix' of the Veteran's Agency, in the form of a \$17 billion new bill which will create an entitlement near the size of [Medicare Part D](#). They say that it will not fix the agency's problems, and may lead to the rationing of care.

Late on Thursday, *PoliticusUSA* [reports](#) that the Republican Party is 'self-destructing' as Speaker Boehner is refusing to let the House GOP go on vacation until they pass a border bill. They write that the chaos was started when Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) met with a group of House Republicans and encouraged them to oppose the bill meaning that the leadership was forced to pull it after it became clear that it would not pass.

Crooks & Liars [writes](#) this week that the online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, has slapped Congress with a ten day ban on anonymous edits for making what they describe as 'disruptive edits'. While the edits have only been made by two or three people, the ban affects 9,000 Hill staffers.

Foreign policy, defense and trade

On Saturday, *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) that the U.S. has evacuated its embassy in the Libyan city of Tripoli amid renewed fighting centered on the city's airport. They say that the violence is a reflection on the fact that there

has been very little discussion on what a post-Gaddafi Libya would or should look like by any of those involved.

RedState writes on Sunday that the aforementioned U.S. Export-Import Bank has been subsidizing Russian companies that are currently under U.S. sanctions due to that country's actions in the Ukraine. They [say](#) that the time is long past for the Bank to be put out of business, as it is 'crony capitalism' at its worst. Staying on U.S.-Russia relations, *Wonkblog* wonders where the latest sanctions leave Russian oil. They [say](#) that this week the Obama Administration moved to restrict the flow of U.S. technology for Arctic and shale oil exploration in Russia, but that how big an impact the sanctions have depends on how strictly the Commerce Department applies them.



Ted Cruz Credit: Gage Skidmore (Creative Commons BY SA)

This week the *White House Dossier* [gives](#) what they say are President Obama's top twelve foreign policy failures. These range from the more than 100,000 deaths in Syria, to the inauguration of hostile relations with Russia, and the solidification of leftist regimes throughout Latin America. President Obama's record can't be all bad – at least according to *Daily Kos*. They [say](#) that a recent survey has shown that every major country has more respect for Barack Obama than his predecessor, George W. Bush.

Obamacare and health policy

On Sunday, *The Daily Signal* [looks](#) at whether or not Obamacare will soon be headed back to the Supreme Court. They say that after two rulings last week that both upheld and struck down the provision for tax credits to subsidize those on Obamacare's state exchanges is now likely to be taken up by the higher court. Much of the case hinges on the reading and interpretation of the Affordable Care Act itself. On Tuesday, *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) that a Federal Court of Appeals has rejected a new constitutional challenge to Obamacare. They say that the plaintiff for the case made the argument that the Affordable Care Act was invalid under the Constitution's Origination Clause, which provides that bills that raise revenue should originate in the House, and that the final ACA bill actually originated in the Senate, and would impose tax penalties on those who did not purchase insurance. In this instance, the Court ruled that while the penalty is a tax, it is not one aimed at raising revenue, as stated by the Origination Clause.

Meanwhile, the *White House Dossier* [says](#) that the Obamacare website, Healthcare.gov, is still not working ten months after launch. They say that some insurance companies are unable to gauge the demographics of those who have signed up but aren't paying their premiums because the 'back-end' operating system is not yet working properly.

This week, *Wonkblog* says that the annual Medicare trustees' report shows that the fund is not going broke – at least not until 2030. They also [say](#) that there is continuing uncertainty around the slowdown in healthcare spending in recent years, and that no-one is really sure how long it will last.

The economy and society

On Sunday, *The Atlantic* [writes](#) that Whiteness is still a proxy for being American, after a Florida Representative mistook two Indian-American officials for Indians. They say that this attitude helps to explain how a 2011 poll found that 45 percent of Republicans thought that President Obama was born outside of the United States. They say that conservatives have also questioned the 'Americanness' of American Muslims.

President Obama deserves credit for reducing income inequality, [writes](#) *Wonkblog* this week. They say that much of the debate over inequality is around market (paycheck) inequality and post-policy inequality, with the latter reflecting people's actual incomes after tax rebates and entitlements. They say it does not make sense to give Obama credit or criticism for movements in market inequality during his tenure.

And finally...

Crooks & Liars [reports](#) that Washington State Representative Mike Hope, aka, 'Representative Beefcake' has resigned, following allegations that he has been registered to vote in two states since 2013. They say that last year Hope made headlines for a series of topless photos he posted to the IMDB online movie database, as part of a promotion for his low budget film, 'Vampire Soul'.

Roll Call's Heard on the Hill marks the 25th anniversary of former Representative, now Senator, Dick Durbin's impassioned [speech](#) in favor of using wooden bats in professional baseball.

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