

## Redistricting in Florida, Fitzgerald crashes and burns in Ohio, and Utah's same-sex marriage appeal: US state blog round up for 2 – 8 August

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 in the Green Mountain State, *VT Digger* [looks](#) at an upcoming report from the state Legislature on the financial impact of legalizing marijuana in the state. They say that the potential increased tax revenue from such a move could 'erase' the state's current \$31 million budget shortfall.

*Granite Grok* [writes](#) this week that New Hampshire's transportation 'Czar', Christopher Clement, has defended the recent gas tax increase of 4.2 cents. They say that the increase was not necessary, and that the state should redirect some of the gas tax income it generates away from Washington D.C. to be invested in roads locally.

Heading south to Connecticut, *Hit & Run* [writes](#) on Wednesday that a recent state Supreme Court ruling has affirmed the right of state police to detain people who are simply near to those being arrested. They say that the ruling may be trampling on people's rights under the Fourth Amendment, which prohibits unreasonable seizures and requires a warrant for searches.

In New Jersey this week, *Crooks & Liars* [says](#) that Republican Governor, Chris Christie has said that he has no memory of a text he allegedly received from an aide about last year's lane closings on the George Washington Bridge. The statement is part of Christie's ongoing denials that he was involved in any way with the closure, a scandal that has come to be known as 'Bridgegate'. Meanwhile, *Blue Jersey* [looks](#) at what would happen if Governor Christie resigns early next year, as has been speculated. They say that if Christie is replaced by current Lieutenant Governor, Kim Guadagno, then she is likely to continue with most of his policies, though she will be saddled with Christie's budgetary problems, and will have little time to raise funds ahead of the next election in over two years' time.

This week in New York, *State of Politics* [writes](#) that Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo's legal spending has come under fire from a Democratic lawmaker in the state Senate. They say that Cuomo's use of his campaign funds to represent his office in the ongoing saga of his closure of the Moreland Commission, which has been investigating corruption in the state government, is not illegal, but is an unusual approach. Staying in the Empire State, *Hit & Run* writes that the *New York Times* has reported that lawmakers and public-employee unions use the city's pension funds to favor and punish particular groups.

### South

In North Carolina, *wataugawatch* [writes](#) that the state's new budget has been drawn up by 'panicked legislators' just before the midterm elections. They say that the budget increases teachers' pay at the cost of reduced subsidies for healthcare for the poor, and cuts to Medicare payments to hospitals. They say that the budget has been built around the political goal of helping to get GOP House Speaker Thom Tillis elected as a Senator for the state in November.

Heading south to Florida, on Friday, *SaintPetersBlog* [reports](#) that legislative committees in the state Senate and House of Representatives have approved a proposal to make small changes to seven congressional districts to comply with a July court order. The districts had been ruled unconstitutional by a judge as they had been designed by legislators in 2012 to benefit Republicans.

*Yellowhammer* [writes](#) on Tuesday that Alabama remains one of the few U.S. states where manufacturing is 'king', writing that it was the top industry every year between 1990 and 2013.

In neighboring Mississippi, *Y'all Politics* [covers](#) the ongoing refusal of Republican Tea Partier, Chris McDaniel, to concede that state's GOP Senate primary more than 40 days after the vote. They say that this week the McDaniel campaign filed a long report to the Mississippi Republican Party detailing what they say are instances of voter fraud and infiltration of the primary by Democratic voters. On Thursday, *Daily Kos* [reports](#) that the state's GOP has declined McDaniel's challenge to the election result, and have encouraged him to take the matter to court.

In Texas this week, *Crooks & Liars* [writes](#) that militia activists are now appearing on the U.S.-Mexico border as part of a vigilante campaign. They [say](#) that the militia are patrolling some areas to stop incursions from border crossers. Staying in the Lone State, *Burnt Orange Report* writes on Wednesday that 63 GOP state legislators have signed an amicus brief supporting gubernatorial candidate and current Texas Attorney general, Greg Abbot. The brief states that legalizing same-sex marriage 'could lead to legal recognition of polygamy, incest and pedophilia[sic]'.

## Midwest

On Saturday, *Red State* reports that Ohio Democrat and gubernatorial candidate, Ed Fitzgerald, has 'crashed and burned' this month. They say that a story has broken that Fitzgerald was caught in a car in a parking lot with a woman other than his wife at 4:30am in in late 2012. They [say](#) that Fitzgerald is already facing long odds against the incumbent Governor, John Kasich, and that these developments mean that the race for Ohio governor is essentially over. Staying in Ohio, *Ohio Daily* [writes](#) that the water crisis in the city of Toledo is at the heart of what this year's election is about. The town had no usable water earlier this week after a toxic algal bloom in Lake Erie. They say that the response of Ohio Democrats to the crisis has been 'abysmal', and that they have missed an opportunity to hold Governor Kasich to account for his administration's policies that helped lead to the crisis.

Moving north to Michigan, *Hit & Run* [writes](#) that Congressman Justin Amash of the state's 3<sup>rd</sup> District had some choice words for his defeated opponent in the GOP primary this week. Amash stated that his defeated challenger Brian Ellis owes his family and community an apology for his "disgusting, despicable smear campaign", which saw Ellis accuse Amash of being "al-Qaida's best friend" in Congress. *Eclectablog* [writes](#) that Michigan voters this week have passed a measure to give businesses a \$500 million tax break over and above a previous \$1 billion tax break given by Governor Rick



New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (Credit; Pat Arnow) CC-BY-SA-2.0)



Algae in water near Toledo, Ohio. Credit: Diana Schnuth ([Flickr](#), CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0)

Snyder and GOP legislators after the 2010 election. They say that the business community spent \$8 million in support of the measure, while 'not a dime' was spent against it.

In Minnesota this week, *Bluestem Prairie* [reports](#) that a café in the state has started charging customers a 'minimum wage fee' in order to offset the state's recent minimum wage increase. They say that the fee is a petty public relations stunt that has only been made after the state's restaurant industry failed to make the case to the Minnesota Legislature for a 'tip credit' system that would mean that wait staff could be paid less than the minimum.

*SayAnythingBlog* [writes](#) that North Dakota may be getting carried away with its ballot measures, given that the Secretary of State is reviewing signatures submitted by three ballot measure committees, and that they will join five measures already on the ballot. They say that while the citizen initiated ballot measure process is good for democracy, some of the recent ballot measures may have been put forward by 'deep-pocketed activists' who have bought their way onto the ballot.

## **West and Pacific**

On Thursday, *The Atlantic* [writes](#) that the recently appointed Democratic Senator, John Walsh, has suspended his campaign for a full Senate term after it emerged that he had plagiarized large portions of his master's thesis at the U.S. Army War College in Pennsylvania. They say that there are a number of candidates to replace Walsh, including former Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer who had previously turned down the chance to run.

In Colorado, *Hit & Run* [reports](#) that despite the legalization of marijuana this year, there has been no change to the general downward trend in traffic fatalities. They say that the falling numbers fly in the face of warnings made by anti-marijuana groups that had predicted that legalization would lead to more accidents.

Moving north to Wyoming, *WyoFile* [writes](#) that it is time for the state to review its oil and gas bonding regulations as it is currently facing the expensive task of reclaiming over 1,500 oil and gas wells. They say that many oil and gas operators do not have sufficient bonding money to reclaim their wells.

Utah's ban on same sex marriage was recently struck down by the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals. *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) that the state's Attorney General has appealed to the Supreme Court to review the ban. They say that if the Supreme Court does hear the appeal, it could issue a 'blockbuster' ruling on gay marriage by next June.

In California this week, *Flashreport* [writes](#) that gun control is thriving in the Golden State given that a bill is now before the state Legislature that would require BB and pellet guns to be painted bright colors so that would not be mistaken for real guns. They say that painting these guns brightly will create the impression that they are children's toys and not recreational and target sports guns.

Heading up to Alaska, the *National Journal* [writes](#) on the odd case of the two candidates named 'Dan Sullivan' who are running for statewide office in the state this year, one for Senator, the other Lieutenant Governor.

Finally this week, *Daily Kos* [says](#) that a primary defeat for the incumbent Governor Neil Abercrombie may well be on the cards in this weekend's Democratic primary, with polls showing state Senator David Ige in the lead by double digits. They say that the general election in November will be further complicated by the presence of former Democrat Mufi Hannemann who is running as an independent, and is expected to take around 15 percent of the vote.

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