

Christie looks clear over Bridgegate, Landrieu headed for Louisiana loss, and the high cost of policing in Ferguson: US state blog round up for 29 November – 5 December

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, *VTDigger* [reports](#) that Vermont Governor, Democrat Peter Shumlin intends to propose an 8 percent employer payroll tax and an income based contribution to finance the state's single payer healthcare plan. They say that in its first year, Vermont's single payer scheme may cost as much as \$2 billion.

Heading south to Massachusetts, *Blue Mass Group* [looks](#) at Boston's plans to bid for the 2024 Summer Olympics. They say that the only current plan at the moment is to locate a 60,000 seat stadium on the current site of the New Boston Food Market, which would displace 700 working class jobs and a \$1 billion a year economic cooperative.

New York was in the news this week after a Grand Jury decided not to indict a police officer for his involvement in the death of Eric Garner, after being put into a choke hold by police in Staten Island earlier this year. *Wonkblog* [writes](#) on Wednesday that quibbling over the cause of Garner's death misses the point, as the use of chokeholds is already forbidden by the New York police department, and has been for more than two decades. They say that there have been nearly 200 complaints every year about the police's use of chokeholds since 2001, and that this may be down to the NYPD's lack of stringent enforcement of its rules. In other Empire State news, *State of Politics* [writes](#) that with Republicans in full control of the New York State Senate chamber, another minimum wage increase out of Albany is very unlikely.

Heading over to New Jersey, *National Journal* [reports](#) this week that a new report commissioned by state lawmakers has found no conclusive evidence that Governor Chris Christie was aware of the lane closures on the George Washington Bridge last year. While the report seems to clear Christie of involvement in the so-called 'Bridgegate' scandal, they say that it does show that two of his aides who orchestrated the lane closures acted with impunity and responded to them slowly. Staying in the Garden State, *Blue Jersey* writes on Monday on the problem of child homelessness in the state. They say that in 2012-2013, there were nearly 17,000 homeless children in New Jersey, up from just under 11,000 in 2010-2011. They [say](#) that Governor Christie needs to more to help such children with his state budget.

South



George Washington Bridge Credit: George Pankewytsch (CC-BY-2.0)

FitsNews [reports](#) that in South Carolina this week, GOP Governor, Nikki Haley, is endorsing a ‘nanny state’ plan which would require doctors to provide the state government with their patients’ prescription records. They report that the Haley administration has taken this step to combat what they say is the rampant abuse of prescription drugs in the state, but that there is very little evidence that this is occurring.

Heading west to Tennessee, *The Daily Signal* [writes](#) that the state’s Republican Party will have to decide whether or not to expand Medicaid in the upcoming 2015 legislative session. They say that while the expansion is a priority for the state’s Democrats, conservative groups have warned that it might kill more than 67,000 private sector jobs in the state.

In the Sunshine State, *SaintPetersblog* [reports](#) that judge has suspended the enforcement of a Fort Lauderdale ordinance that restricts people from feeding the homeless for 30 days. The challenge to the ordinance came from a 90-year old homeless advocate, Arnold Abbott, who had been arrested for repeatedly defying it.

Voters in Louisiana go to the polls Saturday for what must be the last election of the 2014 midterm cycle. *Outside the Beltway* [writes](#) that Mary Landrieu, the incumbent Democratic Senator looks like she is headed for a big loss against her Republican challenger, Bill Cassidy. As of Tuesday, Cassidy held a near 16 point lead over Landrieu.

In the Lone Star State this week, *The Atlantic* [looks](#) at whether or not Texas will execute a mentally ill man. They say that the imminent election of Scott Panetti, is one of many reasons that show how the death penalty in its current form is profoundly flawed. They say that it is administered in a largely arbitrary way across the country. Staying in Texas, *Juanita Jean* writes on Tuesday on state GOP Representative, Dan Flynn, who has decided to set up a panel of 14 state legislators to vote on the federal laws that Texas will follow, and those that it won’t. They [say](#) that the policy – known as nullification – is in effect a way to secede from the union one law at a time.

Midwest

Michigan’s *eclectablog* [reports](#) this week that state Republicans have given their support for expanding civil rights protections for the LGBT community, but only so long as those protections include a “license to discriminate” for those providing services to deny them to gays, lesbians, or bisexuals on the basis of their religious beliefs. Staying in Michigan, *The American Interest* gives an overview of the conclusion to Detroit’s bankruptcy. They [say](#) that the greatest challenges facing the city now are its lingering pension debts and unreformed operations. They [write](#) that the reforms that the city has already made to its retirement system is a major operational reform, and its benefit plans rank among the best designed in the public sector.

Moving south to Indiana, *Hit & Run* [writes](#) on Thursday that a Federal judge has found that a 2013 state law that defines abortion clinics to include facilities that prescribe abortion drugs to be unconstitutional. They say that with the law overturned providers or abortion pills will now not have to make costly and unnecessary renovations.

Heading west, *Progress Illinois* [writes](#) that Chicago’s City Council has this week passed an ordinance to raise the city’s minimum wage to \$13 an hour by 2019. They say that city Alderment who voted for the measure, which will provide relief to 400,000 people on low wages, say that it is a first step on the road to a \$15 minimum wage.



Police in Ferguson, Missouri Credit: Vladimir Badikov (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0)

In Wisconsin this week, *The Political Environment* [writes](#) on state Republicans' proposals for a new right to work law, which would stop private sector labor unions from requiring workers to pay dues. They say that the 'shell game' is all about the GOP Governor, Scott Walker, and that it did not come "out of nowhere all of a sudden", with Walker using it his own political advantage.

This week, *National Journal* [looks](#) at the policing of the ongoing protests in Ferguson, Missouri. They say on Friday that since the police shooting of unarmed black teenager, Michael Brown in August, nearly \$12 million has been spent on the National Guard and Highway Patrol. At this point there is no end date to these forces' patrolling of the Ferguson area.

West and Pacific

On Monday, *The Spot* [reports](#) that Colorado Governor, John Hickenlooper has expanded on his controversial comments on immigration. He had previously downplayed the importance of the so-called path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants in a Congressional immigration reform deal. They write that the Democratic Governor has now stated that he meant that a path to citizenship is not the first priority for undocumented immigrants themselves.

Heading over to Arizona, *Blog for Arizona* [writes](#) that the Republican Governor-elect, Doug Ducey has hired Kirk Adams, an "operative" for the Koch brothers as his chief of staff. They say that this is part of Ducey's plan to turn Arizona into "Kochtopia", which involves business tax cuts.

On Sunday, *Daily Kos* takes a backward look at the recent midterm elections, using Nevada's results as an example. They [say](#) that the GOP enjoyed a landslide in the Silver State, with the Democrats losing the state Senate, Assembly, a House seat, and a number of statewide races. They say that a lack of Democratic turnout played a role, and a poor representation at the top of the ticket which meant a lack of enthusiasm amongst Democratic voters for candidates that were downballot.

Moving west to the Golden State, *Fox & Hounds* [looks](#) at what they say is California's "New, Big, Nonpartisan Political Tent". They write that this tent is forming around education reform and a desire to restore financial health around the state's public institutions.

On Thursday, *Wonkblog* [looks](#) at the effects that falling oil prices will have on what they dub "America's own petro-state" – Alaska. They say that with oil prices below \$70 a barrel, the state's budget deficit could balloon to more than \$3 billion.

Honolulu Civil Beat [writes](#) this week on 10 things that Hawaii's next Governor, Democrat, David Ige, has said he will do. These include boosting government transparency, triple the supply of affordable housing, and increase hotel capacity.

Featured image: New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie Credit: [Gage Skidmore](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-SA-2.0](#))

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Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of USApp– American Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.

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