

Florida's budget surplus, Walker's gaffes in Wisconsin, and Colorado sued over marijuana law: US state blog round up for 13 – 19 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

On Wednesday, *Green Mountain Daily* [writes](#) that Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin has painted himself into a corner over single payer health in the state. They say that despite previously embracing and pushing for single payer in Vermont, he has now given up on the plan because funding the program would require raising taxes to prohibitive levels.

Heading west to New York, *Hit & Run* [writes](#) this week that despite recent accusations, by protestors, members of the New York Police Department does not stand out among the country's police departments in terms of their use of deadly force, with one fatal shooting per million residents in 2013 compared to the national average of 1.5. Staying in New York, Governor Andrew Cuomo has had a busy week; [according](#) to *Daily Kos* he has been 'busting unions' by sending notices to 1,000 members of the Public Employees Federation (that supported his primary challenger in the recent midterm election) that the state is looking to classify them as non-union workers; and he has also ordered a ban on fracking in the state [writes](#) *Political Animal*.

In New Jersey this week, *PolitickerNJ* [writes](#) that while GOP Governor Chris Christie is in the national headlines because of his presidential ambitions, recent state polls show that 47 percent of voters disapprove of his job performance.

Meanwhile in Pennsylvania this week, *Keystone Politics* [reports](#) that most of the state is currently policed by militias, with 2/3 of the state's officers working part time.

South

In the Old Dominion State this week, *Bearing Drift* [writes](#) that Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe is planning to introduce a new package of gun restrictions that will put a one month time limit on handgun purchases and require background checks at gun shows. They say that Democratic Governor McAuliffe is trying to split the state's Republicans who are divided over the issue.

Daily Kos [reports](#) that the Republican Governor of Tennessee has this week proposed to expand Medicaid in the state. They say that Governor Bill Haslam has proposed a privatized Medicaid expansion for those between 21



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

and 64 years of age. If the bill can pass muster with the state's GOP legislature and the Obama administration, then more than 160,000 Tennesseans will get healthcare.

Heading south to the Sunshine state, *The Shark Tank* [reports](#) that thanks to Republican Governor Rick Scott, the state's budget surplus is expected to hit \$1 billion this year, despite criticisms from Democrats that his economic plan was not working. On Friday, *SaintPetersblog* [says](#) that the Supreme Court will not block same sex marriages in the state. They write that it has decided against stepping into a case after a federal judge ruled that Florida's ban on same sex marriage was unconstitutional. Still in Florida, *National Journal* [looks](#) at how normalizing relations with Cuba, announced by President Obama this week, could reshape the state's politics.

In Alabama this week, *Yellowhammer* [reports](#) that a Republican State Representative, Barry Moore, has proposed that the state's income tax should be replaced with a consumption tax in order to address the state's \$260 million budget deficit. They say that Moore has stated that a state consumption tax would be the only tax "illegals pay".

Midwest

This week *Indy Politics* [reports](#) that Indiana's Supreme Court has resolved a legal challenge to the state's right to work law that means that a statute that prevents involuntary union dues and fees can now be enforced.

Heading over to the Badger State this week, *Crooks & Liars* [says](#) that Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker has made yet another religious gaffe by citing what he believed to be a Biblical proverb ("teach a man to fish..."), in justifying his refusal to expand Medicaid in the state, when the proverb was actually a Chinese one. This gaffe follows Walker's recent signing a letter to a constituent with the phrase "Thanks again and Molotov", rather than "mazel tov". *Daily Kos* is also [critical](#) of Walker this week writing that the Republican Governor does not see any reason to keep his campaign promises of transparency. They say that while GOP Presidential contender will release 250,000 emails from his time as Governor of Florida, Walker has refused to do the same.

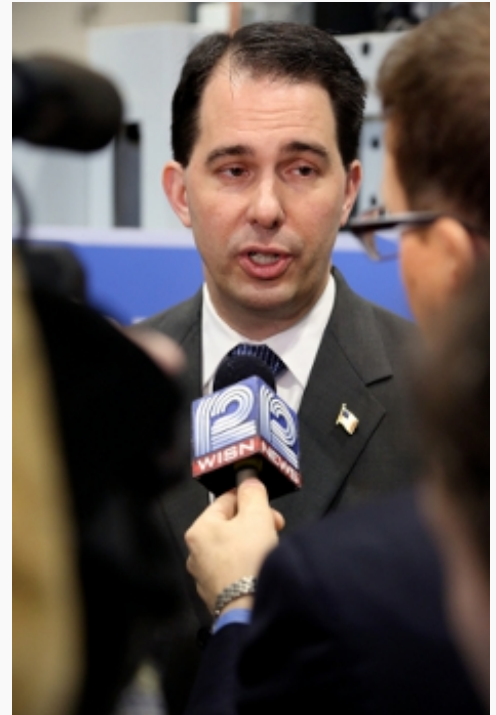
On Monday, *Blog for Iowa* writes that some state employers are regularly stealing from their employees. They [say](#) that a new report from the Iowa Policy Project suggests that employees in Iowa are robbing workers of \$600 million every year.

Hit & Run [reports](#) on a new bill introduced into the Missouri state legislature this week that would give men the final say on whether or not a woman can get an abortion. They say that the Republican bill would require the woman to get written permission from the man who impregnated her to be able to get an abortion, other than in cases of incest or rape.

Moving up to North Dakota, *SayAnythingblog* [writes](#) this week on previous proposals for reforming the state's oil tax, which would have seen taxes fall as production increased. They say that if the measure, which would have removed tax exemptions and triggers for the oil industry, had been introduced in 2013, the state would be in a better financial position than it is today in the face of falling oil prices.

West and Pacific

On Friday, *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) that both Oklahoma and Nebraska are suing the state of Colorado in the Supreme Court over its legalization of marijuana. They say that the two states are suing Colorado over accusations that its regulated, but legal, marijuana shops are 'piping' marijuana into their jurisdictions.



Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker Credit: Gateway Technical College (CC-BY-NC-ND-2.0)

Heading north to Wyoming, *Wyofile* [writes](#) this week that since 1997, state police departments have acquitted \$5.7 million in military gear through the Department of Defense's 1033 Program. They say that this includes four Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles, or MRAPs, and an armored personnel carrier worth \$244,000.

In Montana this week, *Cowgirl Blog* [writes](#) that a Tea Party leader has filed paperwork to claim ownership over the name of a non-partisan women's group, Women for a Better Sanders County. He then took out ads claiming the group supported a Tea Party candidate for the state legislator in the recent elections. They say that this is only one Tea Party plot to defraud voters in Montana.

Wonkblog [reports](#) this week that California may be on the verge of an egg shortage, after a new regulation is set to go into effect that will force hen houses to give more room to each egg laying chicken. They say that this could cause egg prices to jump by as much as 20 percent in the state.

On Thursday, *Crooks & Liars* [reports](#) on a recent march in the capital of Washington State, Olympia. They say that the march was to protest a new state initiative which would require background checks on most gun sales. The marchers claimed that the new law violates the Constitution, and accused the state of 'government tyranny'.

In the Aloha State this week, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [reports](#) that outgoing Governor, Neil Abercrombie has pardoned more than 80 people during his single term, with most since he lost his Democratic primary in August. They say that he has pardoned more people this year than his Republican predecessor did in her last year in office.

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