

NYPD oversight, Wisconsin's concealed carry law, and high speed rail on course in California: US state blog round up for 6 – 12 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* [writes](#) that Vermont's GMO labelling law, due to take effect in 2016 is in the crosshairs of Congress. They write that Congressional Republicans have introduced a bill that would block states from regulating GM ingredients.

Moving south to Massachusetts, *Blue Mass Groups* [looks](#) at how communities in Boston can say "no" to the siting of Olympics venues as the city puts together a bid to host the games in 2024.

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On Saturday, *Daily Kos* [reports](#) on new statistics that show that 15 percent of arresting officers in the New York Police Department make 75 percent of all resisting arrest charges, charges that are often used to cover the excessive use of force by police. Staying in the Empire State, *State of Politics* [reports](#) that Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo's office has said it is reviewing a proposal from the state's Attorney General for it to have the authority to investigate the deaths of unarmed civilians caused by police officers.

These reform proposals come in the wake of a Staten Island Grand Jury's decision to not indict a police officer for his involvement in the death of Eric Garner, after the officer used a chokehold on the unarmed man. Cuomo [looks](#) to have had a busy week – *Capitol Confidential* writes on Wednesday that he met with rapper Jay Z about reforms to New York's criminal justice system.



Moving over to New Jersey, *PolitickerNJ* [writes](#) this week that 2015 may well be the first year that the city of Hoboken finds itself without representation in the state capital, Trenton. They say that the current Assemblyman representing the 33rd District (which includes the city) who is from Hoboken, could be bumped from the ticket next year, with no guarantee that the state's Democrats will pick a replacement from the city.

South

This week's 'Cromnibus' bill passed by the House of Representatives included a rider that would prevent Washington D.C. from effectively legalizing marijuana. On Thursday, *National Journal* [gives](#) a short history of Congress' meddling with the District's sovereignty from gun control to abortion rights.

North Carolina's *Progressive Pulse* [reports](#) that the state's case in the Supreme Court over its 'Choose Life' license plates. They say that the case, which concerns on whether or not the plates' messages are vanity or government expressions, is now on hold.

Heading south to the Sunshine state, *SaintPetersblog* [writes](#) on Friday that while Florida's economy appears to be doing well, it is not a sustainable one, with an increasing number of jobs coming from the leisure and hospitality sector. That sector has seen low wage rises out of pace with inflation, meaning that households will still be struggling to make ends meet.

This week, *Left in Alabama* [criticizes](#) a State Senator for claiming that news and opinion websites and bloggers may have more limited access to legislators in the next session, because they "are not real journalists".

On Sunday, *National Review's The Campaign Spot* [reports](#) that Bill Cassidy has defeated incumbent Senator Mary Landrieu with 55.9 percent of the vote to 44.1 percent in Saturday's election. They say that with Cassidy's win, the Republican Party now holds all statewide offices in Louisiana.

In the Lone Star State this week, *Burnt Orange Report* [writes](#) that the Attorney General, Greg Abbott, may block Dallas County from raising the local minimum wage to \$10 an hour. They say that this week Abbott has issued an opinion that Dallas County's proposal would violate state labor law.

Midwest

On Wednesday, *Ohio Daily* [reports](#) on the state legislature's lame duck session. They say that state legislators have dropped the minimum wage scale for teachers and removed the requirements for schools to have a certain number of support personnel.

Michigan's *eclectablog* [reports](#) this week on a bill from state Republicans that would strip the use of science out of any management of state lands as it pertains to diversity. They say that the bill, which is heading towards a House vote may open the way to greater corporate exploitation of natural resources.

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On Friday, *Political Heat* [looks](#) at whether or not Wisconsin's 2011 law allowing for concealed carry has made the state safer. They say that following the law's implementation, violent crime increased, which shows that it has not made Wisconsin safer.

Outside the Beltway [reports](#) this week that a group of protestors from Ferguson, Missouri, who were marching over the death by a police officer of Michael Brown in August, were met by counter protestors who displayed Confederate flags and racist symbols.



South Dakota's *Madville Time* this week [reports](#) that the state has saved over \$9 million thanks to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). They write that the ACA has rendered the state's high risk pool (which provided insurance to people that private insurers wouldn't cover) superfluous, and the program will be ended at the close of the fiscal year, leading to the savings.

In neighboring North Dakota this week, *SayAnythingblog* [reports](#) that tax collection rates have soared even as the state has cut its tax rates. They say that if Governor Jack Dalrymlpe's proposed further tax cuts go through, then

income taxes will be nearly 50 percent lower than they were before 2009.

West and Pacific

On Wednesday this week, Colorado's *The Spot* [looks](#) at recently re-elected Governor John Hickenlooper's plans for his second inauguration in January. They say that his festivities will be unconventional in their modesty, which him likely to eschew the black tie receptions favored by previous Governors.

Moving over to Arizona, *National Journal* looks at why two House candidates are still tapping fundraisers for cash. They say that Democratic Representative Ron Barber is down by only 161 votes to his GOP challenger, Martha McSally in the state's 2nd Congressional District, with a recount now taking place. They [say](#) that both candidates spent everything they had fighting a close campaign, and now need to fundraise further to pay staff and lawyers who are monitoring the recount. Staying in the Grand Canyon State, *Blog for Arizona* writes this week on the state Republican Party's 'culture of corruption'. They [say](#) that Arizona's media tend to defend the rich and powerful elite that the GOP represent, and so gloss over corruption, such as when Governor-elect Doug Ducey appointed Kirk Adams as his chief of staff, despite Adams' dodgy record.

Heading west to California, *The Atlantic* reports that high speed rail is now on course in the Golden State. They [say](#) that in a few weeks' time, recently re-elected Governor Jerry Brown will conduct a ground breaking ceremony on the first leg of the state's new high speed rail system, and that the winning bid for the next part of the line's construction has come in under budget estimates at \$1.2 billion. *Political Animal* [looks](#) at whether or not there will be an open Senate seat in 2016, when Democrat Barbara Boxer's current term expires. They say if Boxer, who has held the seat since 1992, resigns, there are a number of younger Democrats, including Attorney General Kamala Harris, who may well step up.

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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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