

Boston to bid for Olympics, Oklahoma earthquakes, and Montana GOP's mistakes: US state blog round up for 3 – 9 January

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 New Hampshire, *miscellany: blue reports* that the State Legislature has voted to lift a two-year ban on firearms on the House floor and gallery. They say that one representative, Don Leeman, has stated the 149 legislators who voted against the measure are “possibly not American”.

Moving south to Massachusetts, *Blue Mass Group reports* on Thursday that Boston has been selected by the U.S. Olympic Committee as the American nominee to host the 2024 Summer Olympics. They have their doubts that the development of Boston’s bid proposal will be a robust and transparent process that takes into account what the city’s people actually want.

In the Empire State this week, *The Daily Signal writes* that New York City will ban polystyrene foam as of July 1st. They say the ban is a campaign promise made by Democratic Mayor, Bill de Blasio because of the environmental damage the packaging does. Staying in New York, *Hit & Run reports* this week that the New York Police Department’s ongoing slowdown to punish de Blasio for what its unions say is his negative attitude towards the police has resulted in \$10 million less revenue collected from parking tickets every week.

The last year have seen considerable controversy surrounding New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie over his involvement in the closure of the George Washington Bridge between Manhattan and Fort Lee, New Jersey in late 2013. *Daily Kos reports* on Thursday that Christie’s 2013 re-election campaign has been subpoenaed for documents by federal prosecutors looking into the bridge’s closure.

The Daily Signal writes this week that a Grand Jury in Pennsylvania has recommended criminal charges against the State’s Attorney General, Kathleen Kane, for perjury and contempt of court, after her office allegedly leaked protected grand jury materials relating to a bribery case.

South

Maryland was in the news this week after a Republican councilman, Kirby Delauter threatened to sue a local newspaper after they used his name without first gaining his permission, *writes Crooks & Liars*.

Heading south to Florida, *The Shark Tank writes* on Friday that the state’s pro-marijuana lobby this week filed documentation to have the legalization of the drug put on the ballot in 2016. A similar measure failed in November



New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio (CC-BY-NC-ND 2.0)

when it gained 58 percent of voters' support – 60 percent was needed.

Yellowhammer [writes](#) on Sunday that Alabama has more food stamp recipients (over 900,000), than children in public schools (734,000). They say that while many of the state's residents are in need, fraud and abuse for the SNAP food stamp system has been found to be widespread.

Many state legislatures across the U.S. are not full time – Arkansas' is one of them. *The Arkansas Project* [looks](#) at whether or not it should become a full time body. They say that given that there is a strong connection between how often a state's legislature meets and how much it spends, it should definitely stay a part time body.

Louisiana's *Graft Lies & Politics* [looks](#) this week at Republican Governor, Bobby Jindal's plans to cut state contracts, something they say may prove difficult given the large number of contracting companies that have also made campaign contributions to the Governor.



Arkansas State House Credit: [Cliff](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-2.0](#))

Recent years have seen a large uptake in oil extraction in some states via hydraulic fracturing, or 'fracking'. *Wonkblog* [reports](#) on Tuesday that a spike in earthquakes in 2014 may have been caused by fracking.

Midwest

Many Republicans have railed against the Affordable Care Act and its associated expansion of Medicaid in the states. Not so Ohio Governor, John Kasich. *The Daily Signal* [reports](#) this week that Kasich has defended the expansion of Medicaid in his state, which has meant that the state's existing Medicaid program has been able to avoid bankruptcy.

Moving up to Michigan, *FreakOutNation* [writes](#) on Wednesday that the state legislature has approved a bill which would allow those who have protection orders against them for domestic violence to carry concealed weapons. They say that the bill was crafted with the help of the National Rifle Association.

Chicago Mayor, Rahm Emanuel, is seeking re-election on February 24th. *Progress Illinois* [reports](#) on Friday that a recent poll has shown that 50 percent of likely voters in the city will vote to re-elect him.

On Wednesday, *PoliticMO* [says](#) that the newly appointed House Speaker in Missouri, Republican John Diehl, has stated that there will be no new legislative agenda in response to the racial unrest in Ferguson last year.

The *Brennan Centre for Justice* [writes](#) this week on moves towards online voter registration. They say that the state's Voter Registration Commission has signaled its intent to move forward with new regulations that would allow the state's Department of Transportation (DOT) to create a voter registration portal accessible to those with a DOT issued photo ID. They say that there are nearly 100,000 Iowans who are eligible to vote, but lack a DOT issued ID card.

Daily Kos [reports](#) on Friday that Nebraska's Supreme Court has overturned a county court ruling that prevented the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline through the state. The decision sets the stage for a showdown

between the White House – which opposed the pipeline – and the Republican controlled Congress, which has repeatedly voted to approve the pipeline.

West and Pacific

In Colorado this week, *The Spot* [writes](#) that as they prepare for the 2015 legislative session, the state's Democrats are returning to their familiar theme of the middle class. They say that Democratic leaders are walking a fine line with their blunt assessment of the economy, which contrasts with their rosy campaign message in the lead up to last year's midterm elections which focused on Colorado's economic recovery. Staying in the Centennial State, *ColoradoPols* [reminds](#) the state's Republican Party that they do not have a mandate just because they have a one-vote majority in the state's Senate, with Democrats controlling the State House and the Governor's office. They say that Republicans are introducing bills as if they run the State Capitol, including legislation that would allow concealed carry without a permit, a bill that would allow discrimination based on people's religious beliefs and the rollout of school vouchers.

Heading north to Montana, *Cowgirl Blog* [writes](#) this week on the ten biggest mistakes the state's rightwing legislators have made even before the state's legislative session has begun. These include a push for a rule change that would ban the use of technology during committee hearings, banning the public from the House floor, and requiring (and then being forced to rescind) a dress code targeted at women lawmakers and reporters.

The big news out of California this week was the announcement that Barbara Boxer, one of the state's Democratic Senators, will be retiring at the end of her current term, creating an open seat in 2016. *Daily Kos* [writes](#) that as many as 15 Democratic contenders have been mentioned as potential replacements for Boxer, including billionaire, Tom Steyer. Staying in the Golden State, *Calbuzz* [looks](#) at recently re-elected Governor Jerry Brown's final inaugural speech. Their main takeaways from the speech include Brown's commitment to addressing climate change, and continuing to find more compassionate and effective ways of dealing with crime.



Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) Credit: [Senate Democrats](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-2.0](#))

President Obama spent much of his recent holiday in his native Hawaii. *Honolulu Civil Beat* [wonders](#) this week how long the national media will continue to follow him there, especially, as was the case on this trip, when there were no public events scheduled.

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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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