

de Blasio and the police, Georgia's economy, California's new laws: US state blog round up 27 December – 2 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

On Saturday, *miscellany blue gives* what say are the ten most offensive quotes from New Hampshire's Republican Party. Number one involves the denial by a local police commissioner that he did not refer to President Obama by using a racial slur, just prior to his resignation.

Heading south to Rhode Island, *RIFuture writes* this week that the state has the highest rate of marijuana use per capita in the country, according to a recent study.

In New York, the fallout from the shooting deaths of two New York Police Department (NYPD) Officers in late December continued, with many in the police assigning some of the blame to the Democratic Mayor, Bill de Blasio. *Daily Kos writes* that de Blasio must stay strong to his principles and not succumb to the bullying of the police unions and the media. Staying in New York City, *Crooks & Liars reports* on Monday that arrests in the city have fallen sharply as NYPD officers have more or less stopped issuing traffic tickets and arresting for minor offences, as they feel betrayed by Mayor de Blasio. The New Year brought the sad news that former New York Governor Mario Cuomo had died. *Capitol Confidential* has [reaction](#) from local leaders to Cuomo's death.

Heading over to New Jersey, *Blue Jersey wonders* if the residents of the state have 'wised up' about their GOP Governor, Chris Christie. They say that after Christie's re-election in November, 2013, his favorability ratings were around 70 percent. Now more than 85 percent of people rate his 2014 job performance as 'Poor', according to a recent poll.

South

On Wednesday, *Crooks & Liars reports* that the outgoing Governor of Maryland, Democrat, Martin O'Malley has announced that he will commute the sentences of all those who are awaiting the death penalty to life without parole. This is in line with the state General Assembly's repeal of the death penalty in 2013.

Heading south to the Old Dominion State, *Blue Virginia writes* this week on what they say is the state GOP's 'ugly, xenophobic' attitude towards foreigners. They write that Republican State Senator, Dick Black, has recently stated that 'foreigners [are] on the fast track' to getting into state higher education institutions compared to non-immigrant families.

The Progressive Pulse looks at the many economies of North Carolina this week. They say that while parts of the state are experiencing growth, such as in the metro centers, many counties (60 out of 100) are still at pre-recession levels of unemployment.

In a similar vein, *The Atlantic looks* at what is wrong with Georgia economically. They say that while many other states are in recovery, the Peach State's unemployment rate has risen to the second highest in the country at 7.2 percent. They say that despite the state's reputation as being business friendly, its hands-off approach to the economy which has seen public school funding and unemployment benefits slashed is actually part of the problem.

In Florida this week, *SaintPetersBlog reports* that the state's Attorney General, Pam Bondi, has asked a federal judge to clarify whether or not officials in all of the state's counties can issue marriage licenses to same-sex

couples. The District Court Judge, Robert Hinkle, has ruled that the state's ban on same-sex marriages is unconstitutional, and his stay on the ruling will expire at the beginning of next week. They say that the association that represents county clerks has said that the ruling only applies to Washington County, where the legal challenge originated.

Heading west to the Lone Star State, *The American Interest* writes that Texas has picked a bad time to reconsider the expansion of Medicaid. They say that Governor-elect Greg Abbott may be more open to the expansion of Medicaid than his predecessor, Rick Perry, but that this comes at a time when new enrollees may face difficulties in actually seeing doctors.

Midwest

In Michigan this week, *eclectablog* writes that even as state Republicans continue to defund education, Michiganders are becoming more supportive of greater education funding and higher pay for teachers. They say that a new poll shows that 45 percent of people in the state feel that school teachers are not paid enough, and more than half think schools receive too little funding to provide a quality education.

Moving over to Indiana, *Howey Politics* says that while the Hoosier State's elected officials, have touted 2014 as being a great year, the state's economy has actually not been doing as well as the national economy. They write that Indiana is behind the average in increases to personal incomes, and in total incomes.

RedState has more news this week on the 'John Doe' investigation into Wisconsin Governor, Scott Walker. They say that the state's Government Accountability Board (GAB), who continued investigating Walker despite the retired judges who oversee it voting to end it, and that GAB staff used private Gmail accounts to avoid public scrutiny. Staying in the Badger State, *The Political Environment* writes on Friday that for elections, the state's Republican Party prefers the 'Soviet model'. They say that not only has Governor Walker been using his state paid website for propaganda to raise his profile, he has adopted a law which will overturn the election of the state's Supreme Justice, and has been attacking the aforementioned GAB.

On Thursday, *Blog for Iowa* gives what they say are the top ten things that the state will regret about 2014. At number one is the state's failure to elect progressive Democrat Bruce Braley to take over Tom Harkin's Senate seat, in favor of Republican Joni Ernst.

SayAnythingblog looks at income taxes in North Dakota this week. They say that state lawmakers only have two choices on these taxes – to eliminate them, or phase them out.

West and Pacific

New Mexico's *Progress Now* writes this week that the state is facing a large budgetary hole in 2015, and that State Representative, Bill McCamley is pushing for the legalization and taxation of marijuana to help address the problem.

Heading west, *Blog for Arizona* reports that Senator John McCain has purged Tea Party activist from the state's Republican Party. They say that ahead of his 2016 campaign for Senate re-election, McCain is aiming to unseat



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

conservative activists who hold ‘obscure, but influential’ local party offices by recruiting candidates who are McCain allies.

Hit & Run implores residents of California to enjoy the ‘hundreds’ of new laws coming into force in 2015. They say that these laws include driver’s licenses for undocumented immigrants, mandatory paid sick days, and a measure which will set more spacious conditions for farmed chickens. *Capital & Main* looks at another new California law, a ban on single use plastic bags. They say that business groups attempting to overturn the new law have reported that they have gathered enough signatures for there to be a referendum on the measure in 2016. If the referendum goes ahead, this will suspend the ban until November, 2016.

Moving out to the Aloha State, *The Daily Signal* writes that Hawaii may be the land of ‘spies’, as it has become a prime target for foreign governments looking for U.S. intelligence. *Honolulu Civil Beat* reports on Monday that the state’s insurance exchange, Hawaii Health Connector, is now seeking \$2.5 million from taxpayers to cover its estimated deficit in 2015.

Featured image, New York Mayor, Bill de Blasio. Credit: Kevin Case (Flickr, CC-BY-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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