

## An airport upgrade for New York, prison policy in Illinois and Wisconsin, and Boston gives the Olympics the flick – but could LA take over?: US state blog round up for 25 – 31 July

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, Maine's *Dirigo Blue* [calls](#) for the immediate resignation of the state's Republican Governor, Paul LePage. They argue that his first term in office had already amply demonstrated the fact that he is 'incapable of behaving like a rational human being', and that nothing has changed in his second, citing his proposal for a constitutional amendment to eliminate Maine's income tax and his subsequent threat to veto every Democratic bill sent to him.

Heading down to New Hampshire, *Granite Grok* [looks](#) at what they call Governor Maggie Hassan's budget 'compromise'. They write that in exchange for a proposed reduction in business taxes, there will be more regressive taxes levied against the state's most vulnerable.

On Monday, *Blue Mass Group* [bemoans](#) the 'unelected...NIMBYs' in the No Boston Olympics campaign who pushed Boston to withdraw its bid for the 2024 Games. They comment that the Olympics would have been a 'wonderful excuse' to fix the city's infrastructure with a firm deadline.

In New York this week, *State of Politics* has the [news](#) that Governor Andrew Cuomo has announced, along with Vice-President Joe Biden, that New York's La Guardia Airport will be transformed in a \$4 billion upgrade plan, due for completion after 2020.

*PolitickerNJ* looks [ahead](#) to this year's State Assembly races in New Jersey which are due to take place in November. They say that with few competitive districts, the off-year election may see turnout rates as low as 5 percent or less.

Moving west to the Keystone State, *PoliticsPA* [reports](#) that Governor Tom Wolf is the most liberal in the country according to a new study which examines Governor's public statements, press releases, and voting records.

### South

On Friday, *FITS News* expresses a degree of [amazement](#) at the news – uncovered via a Freedom of Information Act request from BuzzFeed – that South Carolina's Governor, Nikki Haley's did not receive or send any emails related to the Confederate flag in the



Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf. Credit: [Governor Tom Wolf](#) (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

wake of the shooting at Charleston's Emanuel AME Church. They say that Haley may well have deleted any emails on the matter as she has previous form in this regard.

In the Sunshine State, *Saint Peters Blog* [writes](#) this week that new hunts for oil in Florida are raising questions about how the state regulates the oil and gas industry. They say that there are growing concerns from environmental groups that any expansion of drilling will threaten regional water supplies and plans to restore the Everglades.

Continuing on to Alabama, *Yellowhammer* has the surprising [statistic](#) that people in the state own more guns than the entire country of Spain, with more than 4,200,000.

Louisiana's *Something Like the Truth* this week [writes](#) that there is a 'poverty of debate' in the Pelican State's gubernatorial race. They say that the state's leaders may be refusing to discuss poverty because of concerns that they may be labelled as 'tax and spend' liberals.

*Talk Business & Politics* has the [story](#) Monday that an Arkansan has purchased a domain that shares the name of Governor Asa Hutchinson, and redirected it to an LGBT chatroom, in order to draw attention to the Governor's record on gay rights. Hutchinson has previously supported and signed into law a measure meant to prevent local governments from enacting anti-discrimination ordinances.

In 2013, the Texas legislature passed the most restrictive abortion bill in the state's history, which has led to confusion around the status of abortion access in the state. *Burnt Orange Report* [looks](#) at the organizations and groups that have sprung up around the Lone Star State focused on making up to date information as to the availability of abortion services available to anyone who needs it.

## Midwest

On Monday, Ohio's *Plunderbund* voices the [hope](#) that the Buckeye State makes the Republican Party 'pay for xenophobia' in the 2016 election given that it may end playing a major role in both the debate over immigration and in determining the election's outcome. *Ohio Daily*, meanwhile [says](#) that Governor John Kasich – who has recently announced his candidacy for the Republican's 2016 presidential nomination – is spouting 'grandiose-sounding hooey about compassion' given that his gubernatorial record shows that he has been anything but compassionate towards women seeking abortions.

Heading over to the Prairie State, *Progress Illinois* [comments](#) that the state's prison population has fallen to a five-year low, and that GOP Governor, Bruce Rauner wants to see this number fall even more. They also remind readers that despite the fall, the state's prison system is overcrowded by more than 15,000 inmates when compared to its designed capacity.

Staying on the subject of prisons, but moving north to Wisconsin, *blue cheddar* [writes](#) on Wednesday that Governor Scott Walker wants dangerously understaffed prisons in the Badger State, with new figures showing the state's Department of Corrections facing record retirements, a large number of vacancies and high overtime and sick costs. They link these issues with Walker's Act 10 which stripped state employees (including Correctional Officers) of the ability to bargain with management over wages and benefits.

Minnesota's *True North* [looks](#) at what they refer to as the state's 'silent crisis'. They say that the federal refugee resettlement program is out of control with questions over the length of funding available for the program as well as the capacity for state such as Minnesota to take on more refugees.

*SayAnythingBlog* [writes](#) on Saturday that North Dakota's pro-life law (which was recently struck down by the 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals) may not have been a waste of time, given that it may prompt the Supreme Court to review the question of fetal viability.

## West and Pacific

On Friday, Montana's *Reptile Dysfunction* [says](#) that gun politics are bad for the state's Democrats given that there is now more support for gun rights than gun control. They write that often people simply do not feel safe, meaning

that they want to have a gun for self-defense.

Wyoming's *WyoFile* [looks](#) at the deep-seated problems exposed by the shooting deaths of two Native Americans in a Riverton alcoholism treatment center. They say that the tragic killing shows the persistent divide between the local native and non-native populations.

Heading west, *Blue Oregon* [says](#) that the state's Raise the Wage coalition has taken their demands for a \$15 an hour minimum wage off the table so not to weaken their push against Right to Work. They say that the Coalition is now working towards a \$13.50 minimum wage measure in the legislature (rather than achieving \$15 via a referendum), and that this ultimately hurts labor as they are fighting for one wage for their members and another for all Oregon workers.

We heard earlier that Boston has canned the idea of bidding for the 2024 Olympics – but could Los Angeles step in instead as Mayor Eric Garcetti suggested this week? *Fox & Hounds* [tries](#) to pour cold water on this idea, arguing that LA should instead wait and bid for the 2032 Games. Staying in the Golden State, *Flashreport* [says](#) that according to a new book, California's taxpayers are on the hook for outlandish public pension promises, which may lead to a large funding crisis in the coming years.

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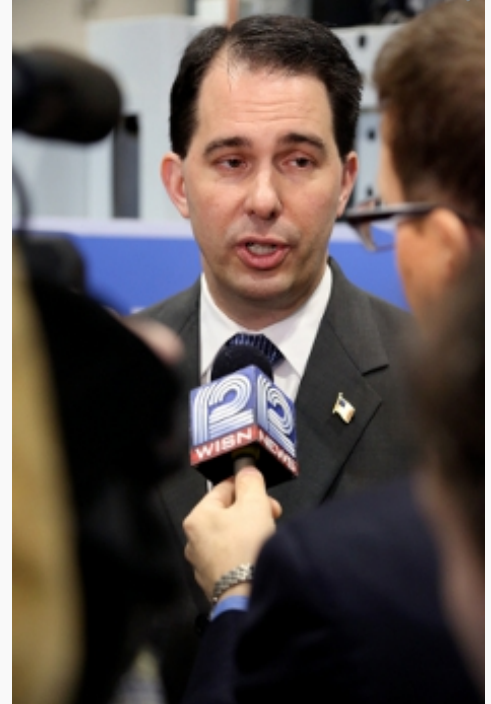
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