

Florida's redistricting deadlock, Walker's falling approval ratings, and Montana cuts 52k voters: US state blog round up for 15 – 21 August

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 Friday this week, the Granite State's *NH Labor News* reports that following attacks from the Republican Party, New Hampshire's teachers have fought back. They [say](#) that after presidential candidate, and former Florida Governor, Jeb Bush, stated in a town hall meeting in the state that he wanted to voucherize education, the president of the local teachers' association stated that Bush was not putting children first or respecting the positive impact of public schools or teachers on the vulnerable and those on low incomes.



New York State Capitol Credit: [JoePhilipson](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0](#))

Heading south to the Empire State, *Capitol Confidential* has the first part in a series of interviews with New York Assembly Speaker, Carl Heastie. They [discuss](#) ethics reform legislation with the Speaker, who argues that legislative ethics come down in part to the judgement of individual lawmakers. Staying in New York, *State of Politics* has the [news](#) that the state's Democrat-led Assembly is likely to back a minimum wage increase of around \$15 for the state.

Which state has the highest property taxes? [According](#) to *Save Jersey* it's the Garden State, which they say has an effective rate of 2.38 percent according to a new analysis. Staying in New Jersey, *PolitickerNJ* [looks](#) at the cities of Bergen and Middlesex which both lack Congressional representation from within. Both municipalities are divided between Congressional districts, which means that many residents are concerned that they have no-one in their county representing their interests.

PoliticsPA this week [writes](#) that Pennsylvania Governor, Tom Wolf, has blasted the state legislature's Republicans who have consistently opposed his policy initiatives, including a new pension plan which they say would have saved the state \$17.3 billion

South

On Friday, Florida's *The Shark Tank* [reports](#) that the state's legislature has failed in its effort to redraw the Sunshine State's Congressional map. Over the last two weeks, the state legislature has been in a special session called specifically to redraw Florida's Congressional boundaries following a state Supreme Court ruling. They say that the state House refused a proposal from the Senate for a formal conference committee to iron out the differences between their proposed district maps.

Moving up to Alabama, *Yellowhammer* [agrees](#) this week that it's now time to consider a sensible new solution to balance the state's budget, after a special legislative session ended with the state Senate proposing \$200 million in cuts in contrast to the Governor's desire for tax increases. They say that a Republican state Senator, Paul Sanford, has proposed that the state's General Fund shortfall would be closed by sharing growth revenue between the state's two main funds. Staying in Alabama, *leftinalabama* [says](#) that despite the state being known for its religiosity and 'family values', it is the top state in terms of Ashley Madison subscriptions, and its divorce rate is the seventh highest in the country.

On Wednesday this week, *The Arkansas Project* has the [news](#) that Governor Asa Hutchinson has announced that while the state's Medicaid expansion will continue, its Obamacare health insurance exchange – which is currently being set up – could be abandoned.

Texas' *Burnt Orange Report* [says](#) that the Lone Star State is still home to the highest percentage of people without health insurance – more than 20 percent. Five years on from the enacting of the Affordable Care Act, all other states have an uninsured population of fewer than 20 percent, and that the difference is down to Governor Greg Abbott's continued refusal to expand Medicaid in the state.

Midwest

Ohio's *Plunderbund* [writes](#) this week that the state's Governor (and Republican presidential contender), John Kasich, is now in his 33rd month of presiding over a state which has had below average job growth, showing that Kasich is not the 'turnaround governor' that he claims to be.

Heading north to Michigan, *eclecta blog* [says](#) on Thursday that the state's Republican Party is continuing to do the bidding of the Great Lakes State's major utility companies, illustrated by new legislative proposals which will slash a tax credit for home solar installations.

In Indiana, *Ogden on Politics* [discusses](#) the aftermath of this spring's controversy over Governor Mike Pence's push for Religious Freedom legislation (RFRA) in the state. They say that while the campaign against the state's RFRA law was successful, it has also spurred on a backlash from religious conservatives who have become much more organized as a result.

Over in the Badger State, *Blue Cheddar* [says](#) that only 39 percent of Wisconsinites approve of the job Governor Scott Walker is doing, 2 points down from his April approval rating.

Iowa was in the news this week as GOP presidential candidates descended on the annual Iowa State Fair. *The Iowa Republican* has a [roundup](#) of what went on, including the arrival of billionaire Donald Trump by helicopter.

On Thursday, South Dakota's *Dakota Free Press* [looks](#) at the law around gay adoption in the state. They write that while same-sex couples can now be legally married after the Supreme Court's ruling in June, the state needs to change its law to give them the ability to adopt.

West and Pacific

On Saturday, *MT Cowgirl* [reports](#) that the president of the GOP Tea party faction in Montana's state Senate is calling for more oversight over the executive branch of government, after they failed to notice a funding allocation for economic development funds for Indian country in the state's budget. Staying in the Treasure State, *Northern Broadcasting* [says](#) that the state's county clerks have cut more than 52,000 voters from the state voter database – 7.7 of the total number of registered voters. They comment that the voters were removed as they are either no longer active or missed between one and three of the last three federal elections.

Moving down to Colorado, *Peak Politics* reminds us that the re-election of the state's Democratic US Senator, Mike Bennet is in no way a sure thing. They say that compared to Mark Udall (a former Democratic Senator from the Centennial State), Bennet's approval rating is 6 points lower than Udall's was 14 months before he lost his 2014 reelection bid.

Many states have begun to target Planned Parenthood for defunding and/or investigation after moves to defund the organization at a federal level recently failed in the US Senate. *Blog for Arizona* says that the Grand Canyon State is no exception with GOP Governor, Doug Ducey planning a 'witch hunt' against Planned Parenthood in the state.

On Wednesday, *Fox & Hounds* has some harsh words for a Senate bill currently making its way through the committee stage in California's state legislature which proposes a mandate that Californians reduce their diesel and gasoline use by 50 percent by 2030. They say that the mandate would cripple the state's economy.

Heading out to the Aloha State, *Honolulu Civil Beat* writes this week on a new study that shows states like Hawaii which have stricter gun-control laws saw fewer gunshot wounds in 2010, compared to those with more relaxed laws.

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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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