

Maryland's 'Mr. Nasty' Governor, Illinois' progressive legislature, and Alabama votes to defund Medicaid – twice: US state blog round up for 1 – 7 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 Thursday, *Maine Progressives Warehouse* has the [news](#) that the state's Supreme Court has ruled against the state's Governor, Paul LePage, in a dispute over whether 71 laws sent to the Governor had become law. LePage had neglected to sign the bills over a disagreement with the Democratic-controlled legislature, and had argued that this amounted to his vetoing of the bills.

Heading down to New Hampshire, *Granite Grok* [criticizes](#) the state's United States Senator, Kelly Ayotte for not joining 44 other Republican Senators in co-sponsoring a bill to defund Planned Parenthood, hurting its chances to proceed to a vote. They say that the decision should have been an easy one for Ayotte.

On Wednesday, the Bay State's *Blue Mass Group* [says](#) that when Governor Deval Patrick left office in January, the state was in good shape, having had ten straight months of job growth and high reserves. They say that new fiscal year numbers show that the incoming administration of Republican, Charlie Baker, did not have a \$1 billion deficit to contend with, despite their claims otherwise, but actually a surplus of \$391 million.

In Rhode Island this week, *RIFuture.org* [argues](#) that despite Governor Gina Raimondo's that building a natural gas energy plant is a good plan for the state, the Ocean State really needs to invest in green jobs, not those that encourage fracking.

In New Jersey this week, *PolitickerNJ* [reports](#) that a new Rutgers-Eagleton poll has shown that Republican Governor, Chris Christie has hit a new low with voters, with a 59 percent now unfavorable, an 11 point increase since April.

Last week saw the indictment of 11-term Pennsylvania Congressman Chaka Fattah by a federal grand jury. In light of Fattah's indictment, *PoliticsPA* has a [brief history](#) of Keystone State representatives who have resigned – 74 out of a total of 1,030.

South

On Monday, *Political Maryland* [wonders](#) how Governor Larry Hogan has morphed into 'Mr. Nasty'.

They say that in less than nine months Hogan has managed to offend much of the state's Democratic leadership by amongst other actions, slashed education aid to Democratic strongholds, killed Baltimore's rapid rail Red Line, and eliminated \$2 million in renovations for an arts center.

Heading down to the Old Dominion State, *Bearing Drift* is [pleased](#) that the state has (finally) decided to dig up \$10 billion worth of uranium and other precious metals in the state, something they claim will be of massive help to the



New Jersey Governor Chris Christie Credit: Gage Skidmore (Creative Commons BY SA)

state's economy.

While concern is growing in some quarters over the possibility of a federal government shutdown in the fall, in North Carolina similar, but local, fears are much more pressing. *NC Capitol Connection* writes that as legislators enter the first legislative week of August there has been no obvious movement on a budget deal, with the August 14th deadline looming heavily. They say that there is more than \$700 million between the state House and Senate budgets, and that a great deal of work is needed before a compromise can be reached.

Moving on to the Sunshine State, *Saint Peters Blog* has a [long analysis](#) of the base map released by the Florida legislature ahead of next week's Special Session on redistricting. They say that the map changes 22 out of the state's 27 Congressional districts, with many voters likely to find themselves in new districts if the map becomes law.

Alabama is currently in the middle of a \$250 million budget crisis. *Yellowhammer reports* on an unusual solution which has been proposed by a state Representative – a tax on adult entertainment. Staying in Alabama, *leftinalabama says* that the state House had to vote twice in order to defund Medicaid. The bill, which cuts \$156 million from the state's Medicaid program did not initially pass, but did after being brought up once more by the majority. The cut will also mean that Alabama will lose around \$450 million in federal matching Medicaid funds.

Heading west to Texas, *Burnt Orange Report* has the [news](#) on Monday that the Lone Star State's Attorney General, Ken Paxton, has been indicted on three felony counts related to securities fraud. They say that Paxton was only elected because of low turnout and that the state GOP has become so weak that it can now be dominated by extreme elements which leads to officials like Paxton being elected.

Midwest

On Tuesday, in light of the new emissions standards announced by President Obama, *Plunderbund writes* that Ohio's last Governor, Ted Strickland had previously introduced measures which reduced emissions by 31 percent from 2005 levels through his renewable energy portfolio.

Moving down to Indiana, *Indy Democrat blog* this week [writes](#) that despite it being so far away, the state's presidential primary in May next year may be another to watch in the Hoosier State, and that there are also at least two hotly-contested Congressional races worth watching.

On Thursday, *Progress Illinois says* that the state's legislature has been recognized for passing key progressive policies this year by the State Innovation Exchange. These include accommodations for pregnant workers, implementing earned sick leave, and modernizing voter registration.

This week *The Political Environment expresses* no surprise whatever that the revelation that the target of the long-running 'John Doe' probe in Wisconsin was none other than Governor Scott Walker.



Maryland Governor Larry Hogan Credit: [Maryland GovPics](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-2.0](#))



Illinois State Capitol Credit: [Patrick Gensel](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0](#))

Over in the Hawkeye State, *Blog for Iowa* [looks](#) at efforts in the state's counties to pass ordinances in the face of state and federal government inaction. Such efforts include a push for a higher minimum wage and a school superintendent willing to break the law to help his students by spending more on the school district's budget.

Heading up to North Dakota, *Say Anything blog* [wonders](#) if the state's US Senator, Heidi Heitkamp is telling the truth about Native American voter suppression in the state after she expressed support for a Senate bill which calls for more polling locations on reservations as well as directing states to mail absentee ballots to voters if their tribe requests it.

West and Pacific

On Thursday, New Mexico's *Joe Monahan* [wonders](#) if the state's 'rising star' Democrats are accident prone after a slew of slip-ups including a Senator who wrongfully reimbursed himself for transport costs and a Congresswoman who did not declare carpets gifted to her from the government of Azerbaijan.

In Idaho this week, *Eye on Boise* [reports](#) that Governor Butch Otter's office has stated that the state's computer network is 'constantly under attack', which has led to the Governor naming a new Cybersecurity Task Force, which will strengthen the state's protections against computer hackers.

Moving down to the Golden State, *Fox & Hounds* [writes](#) Tuesday that California voters may finally get to put the brakes on the state's \$68 billion high speed rail scheme, after a State Senator introduced a bill to put the scheme on the ballot once again.

Honolulu Civil Beat [says](#) that Governor David Ige has stated that there is little chance that the Aloha State's prisoners will be coming home from Arizona anytime soon. In fact, Hawaii's Department of Public Safety plans to send hundreds of more inmates to a private Arizona facility to make room for updates to a Hawaii prison.

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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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