

## Trump vs. Fox, the GOP splinters on Planned Parenthood, and Obamacare not killing jobs: US national blog round up for 9 – 14 August

USAPP Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson** looks at the best in political blogging from around the Beltway. Our round-up of state blogs will follow on Saturday afternoon.

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### President Obama, the Democratic Party, and the GOP

Last week, President Obama announced new emission standards for coal power plants. *Townhall* [writes](#) on Tuesday that these new regulations are targeting red states such as West Virginia, Kentucky, and Wyoming which are heavily dependent on coal for electric power. They say that liberal states, by contrast, are much less dependent on coal, and will therefore have far fewer job losses because of the new standards.

*White House Dossier*, meanwhile [says](#) that despite President Obama's recent comments that he would probably be reelected if he was able to run for a third time, a new survey shows that only 26 percent of voters (and 53 percent of democrats) would vote to re-elect him.

The Republican Party this week was wracked with infighting following billionaire Donald Trump's performance at last week's 10-presidential candidate debate in Cleveland, Ohio. *Political Animal* [says](#) that the past week has shown how much of a mess the party is in; after many had thought that the GOP had the strongest field in decades. *The Federalist* similarly [looks](#) at the Republican Party in relation to Trump saying that while many may feel that he is awful, the Party is far worse given its recent poor record. Also weighing in on the matter, *The Atlantic* [comments](#) that when Trump finally quits or stalls out, the deep Republican divisions that he has exploited will still remain.

*Informed Comment* [writes](#) this week that the current focus on Trump is hiding the Republican Party's war on workers and the middle classes through cutting Medicaid and social security and keeping down the minimum wage.

### Elections and the road to 2016

The vast majority of the current field of presidential candidates has legislative experience at either the state or national level. On Sunday, *The Fix* [looks](#) at the candidates' legislative records, finding that Louisiana Governor, Bobby Jindal may have been the most effective, at least in terms of bills passed compared to the time he spent in the House.

This week also saw Harvard law professor, Lawrence Lessig announce that he was launching a presidential exploratory committee, [according](#) to *Post Politics*. Lessig – who has been a vocal proponent of campaign finance and election reform – has vowed to 'run a full campaign' if he moves forward with a presidential bid. Turning to two

other outsiders who have had massive recent bumps in popularity, Donald Trump and Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, *The Fix* [writes](#) Thursday that despite their rise to the top of their parties' respective polls, neither should expect to actually be elected president. They say that their polling success is linked to the fact that voters don't care about candidates' electability – at least not yet.



Donald Trump Credit: Gage Skidmore (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Debate about who really won last week's GOP debate continued into this one – *Political Animal* [writes](#) Saturday that if anyone thinks that Senator Marco Rubio of Florida or Ohio Governor, John Kasich won the debate, then they do not understand the GOP base, who actually seem to be facing an existential identity crisis brought on by the country seeming to become more liberal. They in turn react to this perceived threat by following Donald Trump. *Mischiefs of Faction*, meanwhile [comments](#) that the biggest loser of last Thursday's debate was actually Ronald Reagan, who mentions of were much sparser than in previous GOP debates.

Just as he was the star of the debate last week, Donald Trump also maintained his position as media star this week. Highlights included:

- His graphically insulting comments towards Fox News host Megyn Kelly, after the debate, getting him disinvited from the conservative *RedState* gathering ([National Journal](#))...
- ...though he later claimed that he wants "to help women" ([Post Politics](#)).
- Trump's supporters brought Fox News 'to their knees' over the row over his comments towards Kelly, which led to Chairman Roger Ailes assuring Trump that he would be covered 'fairly' ([Crooks & Liars](#)).
- *The American Prospect* [writes](#) that the GOP is trying to find ways to knock Trump 'down a peg'...
- ...while *PoliticusUSA* [says](#) that conservative attacks on Trump may backfire by encouraging him to run as a third party candidate.
- Though if Trump tries to run his campaign outside the GOP establishment, it might end up hurting him if he misses out on using the party's consultants ([Monkey Cage](#)).
- *Political Animal* [wonders](#) if the current summer of Trump will end up being an 'Indian summer' of Trump.
- Who is backing Trump? Not stupid people, but angry taxpayers ([The Federalist](#)).
- Trump called Erick Erickson of *RedState* a 'total loser' for disinviting him. Turns out he thinks a lot of other people are losers too ([The Fix](#)).
- Many people think that Trump is a whiner – he agrees; and it gets things done ([Post Politics](#)).
- One thing that Trump will not be getting done is getting Mexico to pay for a massive border wall ([Caffeinated Politics](#))

Moving on to other candidates in the Republican Party's presidential field:

- If elected, one of the first things that Senator Ted Cruz (TX) would do in the Oval Office would be to rescind every 'illegal executive action taken by Barack Obama' ([The Daily Signal](#)).
- Cruz is also the only candidate who seems willing to cozy up to Donald Trump ([Daily Kos](#)).



Florida Senator Marco Rubio Credit: Gage Skidmore (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

- Florida Senator Marco Rubio has 'doubled-down' on his support for legislation that reduces abortion ([Crooks & Liars](#)).
- Does Senator Rand Paul's (KY) flat tax plan show that he lives in an 'economic fantasyland'? ([Political Animal](#)).
- Paul also this week said that thinks that inequality exists because some people work harder than others ([America Blog](#))...
- ...and also trolled Donald Trump even harder, calling him a 'bully' ([Post Politics](#))
- Former Texas Governor Rick Perry's campaign seems to have run out of money, and may be coming to an end ([Outside the Beltway](#)).
- Republican voters apparently love neurosurgeon, Ben Carson's views on race, unlike most voters of color ([The Fix](#)).
- Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal has a new attention-getting strategy – to mention Donald Trump at all times ([Post Politics](#)).
- Ohio Governor, John Kasich, was also a star of last week's debate – so why is he now running from his own record ([RedState](#))?
- Kasich is also the GOP candidate who won't attack Democratic near-frontrunner Hillary Clinton or indeed, any of his opponents ([National Journal](#)).
- [The Atlantic](#) [wonders](#) if former HP CEO, Carly Fiorina, will be able to seize her moment after her post-debate polling surge.

Turning now to the Democratic side of the 2016 presidential race:

- After being interrupted by #BlackLivesMatter protestors in Portland on Sunday, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders hired Symone Sanders, an activist for racial justice, as his campaign's national press secretary ([Post Politics](#)).
- Apparently, 100,000 people have attended Sanders' events this month – but that doesn't mean much ([The Fix](#)).
- Or does it? Sanders now leads democratic polling in New Hampshire ([Daily Kos](#)).



Hillary Clinton Credit: Hillary for America (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0)

- *Monkey Cage* [reckons](#) that if Hillary Clinton gains the Democratic nomination, her running mate is more than likely to be a man.
- Clinton also this week unveiled a \$350 billion plan to boost college affordability, by providing relief for students and graduates of private non-profit colleges (*Political Animal*)...
- ...while *RedState* [says](#) that Clinton is running away from being labelled Obama's third term, as voters seem to want the next President to take a different approach to that of the current Commander-in-Chief.
- Clinton also had to hand over the private email server she used while she was Secretary of State to the FBI – *The Lonely Conservative* [says](#) that she definitely broke the law by using the server to handle classified material.
- Clinton's campaign should expect a boost when the current Vice-President, Joe Biden, rules himself out of the running (*The Fix*).

### **Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda**

On Monday, *The Hill's Congress Blog* [looks](#) at the future of the government enterprises, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, as well as efforts by the government to keep secret the discussions around its seizing control of the two companies in 2008 and profit expropriation in 2012.

Moving on to Congress, *National Journal* [writes](#) Monday that the House is looking forward to a massive overhaul of Medicare in 2016. They say that conservatives on the Hill would like to turn the program into a voucher-based system, and that next year will be about drafting the legislative text ahead of a possible Republican presidency in 2017.

Turning to the Senate, *Roll Call's At the Races* [reports](#) that Planned Parenthood has stated that if the government was to shut down over the funding of the organization, Republicans in close Senate races in New Hampshire, Ohio and Pennsylvania could face a political backlash. *The Daily Signal*, meanwhile, [writes](#) that Senate Republicans have 'splintered' over their strategy to defund Planned Parenthood, with some lawmakers threatening to help shutdown the government despite Senate Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell's (R-KY) promise to keep the government open.

Does President Obama need the Senate for the deal with Iran over that country's nuclear program to go ahead? Yes, [says](#) *The Daily Signal*.

### **Foreign policy, defense and trade**

*The Daily Signal* [says](#) this week that presidential candidate, and former Florida Governor, Jeb Bush, has stated that President Obama has an 'Alice in Wonderland' foreign policy which allows Russia and China to 'act with impunity'. Bush also stated this week that Obama and the then Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, were



responsible for the creation of ISIS in Iraq because of the US troop withdrawal in 2011. *Perspectives* reminds us that it was Bush's brother, George W., who helped create ISIS through mismanaging the country's governance in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion. *The American Interest* also writes on ISIS, but from the angle of Turkey's participation in the coalition against the group. They say that in exchange for US use of their air bases, the Turks now have more cover to expand their war against the insurgent Kurdistan Workers' Party.

*The Federalist* writes on what they call 'Iran's faux multiple personality disorder' which sees those who wish to negotiate with the country view its actions in isolation rather than as a complete whole. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is a vehement opponent of the Iran deal and President Obama has accused him of interfering in US foreign policy over the agreement. *The Hill's Congress Blog* says that Obama is wrong to accuse Netanyahu of interfering given that Israel has a large stake in the deal, and has much to fear from a nuclear Iran.

On Thursday, *Townhall* comments that Obama's foreign policy of 'leading from behind' is also leaving Africa behind as the White House tries to impose peace on the warring factions in South Sudan having done little to stop the civil war from beginning in the first place.

### Obamacare and health policy



On Saturday, *Daily Kos* writes that despite what many on the right have maintained, the expansion of Medicaid has not been bankrupting states. Rather, it's saving them hundreds of millions of dollars, and will continue to do so. Later in the week, *Wonkblog* has the news that new evidence shows that Obamacare is not killing full-time jobs, despite past worries that businesses would cut employees' hours so that they did not have to offer them health insurance or simply hire fewer people.

On Monday, *Hit & Run* wonders if Obamacare is too complex to work after a new report has shown that the program's federal health insurance exchange does not effectively verify critical information about applicants' income and citizenship. *The Daily Signal* meanwhile looks at what the states can do now to be ready if Obamacare is repealed – resist state exchanges, the expansion of Medicaid, and refine and reevaluate their pre-Obamacare regulations to promote a more effective health insurance market.

*The American Prospect* has the fascinating story of Frances Kelsey (who died this month), a doctor and research scientist at the Food and Drug Administration in the 1960s who took on the manufacturer of thalidomide to prevent the dangerous drug from being prescribed to pregnant women.

### The economy and society

This week was the one-year anniversary of the tragic shooting of Michael Brown by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, which helped spur the #BlackLivesMatter movement. *The Atlantic* says that it was a tough weekend for the movement with reports that police cars were shot at in Ferguson (though not by protestors), and with the disruption of Senator Bernie Sanders' campaign rally – both events they say that will have no effect on public

support for criminal justice reform.

*Townhall* [asks](#) on Wednesday if America should redistribute more wealth, but concludes that since the top 3 percent of earners pay more than half the income tax, the system is already redistributive enough. *Workblog* also [picks up](#) on the debate about inequality by discussing proposals for higher minimum wages, currently being pushed by some Democratic presidential candidates. They say that while previous minimum wage increases have not grown the middle class, a raise to \$15 an hour might be able to bump some workers in the high end of poverty into the middle class.



Credit: Tracey O (Creative Commons BY SA)

On Thursday, *Hit & Run* [reports](#) that two states are moving towards putting the legalization of marijuana on the ballot – Ohio and Massachusetts.

**And finally...**

*The Federalist* has a quiz of “[Who said it: Trump or Clinton?](#)”

President Obama has gone on holiday with six pretty thick books with him. *The Fix* [reckons](#) it would take 52 hours for him to read them all.

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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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