

Trump's \$166 billion immigration plan, Clinton's email woes continue, and Walker's Obamacare alternative: US national blog round up for 15 – 21 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

With President Obama vacationing in Martha's Vineyard this week, and Donald Trump's continued domination of the political news cycle, there was little commentary on the president or his party outside that on the 2016 presidential race. *The Federalist*, however, did give a piece of advice to the Democratic Party on Monday, [suggesting](#) that it should rename itself given its historic association with slavery. *Townhall* meanwhile [reckons](#) that there is 'widespread panic' amongst the Democratic Party given that former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, is 'in meltdown' with her rival, Vermont Senator, Bernie Sanders leading the polls in some states.

Moving on to the Republican Party, *Daily Kos* this week [looks](#) at how the Party has been able to gain a semi-permanent majority in the US House of Representatives and in many state legislatures through gerrymandering.

Crooks & Liars, meanwhile [comments](#) that conservatives are still arguing about who lost the Iraq war, and that there is a growing push to blame the trouble in that country on President Obama and Hillary Clinton. *Daily Kos*, meanwhile [discusses](#) conservatism's difficult relationship with the 14th Amendment, after billionaire presidential contender Donald Trump, suggested this week that birthright citizenship should be revoked so that the children of undocumented immigrants would not automatically gain US citizenship. *Hit & Run* [looks](#) at the GOP's recent history on immigration policy; from Ronald Reagan and George HW Bush's relatively open stance towards undocumented immigration in the early 1980s to Trump's call for a new border wall with Mexico and the deportation of undocumented immigrants.

Elections and the road to 2016

This week the outspoken billionaire Donald Trump continued to dominate the GOP's polling and the commentary from political bloggers:

- Many are asking if Trump has peaked – *RedState* [says](#) that they're asking the wrong question.
- Trump has definitely been hogging the presidential campaign conversation – *Monkey Cage* [explores](#) 7 ways he's done this in detail.
- He's also changed his mind on policy issues at least 20 times since mid-June (*Post Politics*)

- Trump announced on Sunday that he would deport all 11 million undocumented immigrants in the US ([Political Animal](#))...
- ...a plan that a majority of Republicans don't actually support ([Hit & Run](#))...
- ... which would cost \$166 billion ([Daily Kos](#))...
- ... and would have barred his own grandfather from coming to the US ([The Atlantic](#)).
- [The Federalist](#) reckons that the part of Trump's immigration plan to no longer allow citizenship for the children of undocumented parents 'isn't that crazy'.
- Maybe everything that we think about the Trump surge is wrong, and he is actually siphoning support from establishment candidates such as Jeb Bush? ([RedState](#)).
- [The Atlantic](#), meanwhile, looks at what Trump voters actually want...
- ...while [The Fix](#) reckons that the Huffington Post is making a mistake for not covering Trump as a serious candidate.

Turning to the remainder of the Republican Party's presidential contenders:

- [National Journal](#) says that no matter who wins, overturning President Obama's executive orders on the first day of a Republican president's term wouldn't be possible.
- The GOP's primary is already a mess ([The American Prospect](#))...
- ...but they should not worry, as a divisive primary will not cost them the White House ([The Fix](#)).
- Former Hewlett-Packard CEO, Carly Fiorina has some rather variable opinions on vaccination ([Daily Kos](#))...
- ...though her post-debate polling bump is apparently nothing to be sniffed at ([The Fix](#)).
- Ohio Governor, John Kasich has it in for teachers' lounges ([Crooks & Liars](#))....
- ...and has no problem with US federal abortion law, as it currently stands ([RedState](#)).
- [The Federalist](#) damns Kasich with faint praise, saying that he 'offers a bold opportunity for business as usual'.
- [Informed Comment](#) says that former Florida Governor, Jeb Bush has not ruled out using torture as an interrogation technique in the same way that his brother George W had authorized whilst president.
- Jeb Bush also apparently lied this week about meeting Black Lives Matter activists prior to a meeting in Nevada ([Crooks & Liars](#)).
- The Iowa State Fair this week means more of the same high calorie foods for Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker ([Post Politics](#)).
- Walker did more than just eat at the State Fair this week – he apparently had a great 27 seconds shouting down protestors as well ([The Fix](#)).
- [Crooks & Liars](#) reckons that Scott Walker's immigration plan is just as cruel as Donald Trump's.
- [RedState](#) wants former Texas Governor, Rick Perry to stay in the presidential race...



Former Florida Governor, Jeb Bush Credit: Michael Vadon (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

- ...while Kentucky Senator, Rand Paul, has bought a presidential caucus in his home state so that he can stay in the race as well ([The Atlantic](#)).

Moving on to the Democrats' 2016 presidential field:

- Speculation continued into this week that the current Vice-President, Joe Biden, is considering a presidential run – something that Democratic donors seem none too happy about ([Outside the Beltway](#)).

- The biggest news on the Democratic side this week was the continuing imbroglio over former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server, which may have involved the handling of classified information – [The Fix](#) writes that Clinton is trying to make the controversy political, when it really isn't.



- [Townhall reckons](#) that Clinton is now more likely to go to jail than to the White House in 2016.
- [RedState says](#) on Tuesday that Clinton's email problems are getting worse as 305 emails have been identified which may contain classified information....
- ..while [Outside the Beltway writes](#) that Clinton's use of email servers shows her lack of judgment.
- Hillary Clinton may be part of the first postmodern political machine ([The American Interest](#)).
- [American Thinker](#), meanwhile, [says](#) that Vermont Senator, Bernie Sanders, is 'pathetic and outdated'...
- ...as [Monkey Cage ponders](#) if he is able to win in 2016.

Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda

Who should handle the country's growing nuclear waste problem? Not the government, [writes The Daily Signal](#), who argues that the nuclear industry should be allowed to manage its own spent fuel, a move which they say might also be an opportunity to develop newer, safer, and less expensive energy technologies.

Republicans tend not to be a fan of expanding government, something that would occur if Donald Trump's immigration plan was put into place. [Hit & Run writes](#) Monday that Trump's plan would mean 10,000 extra federal employees as well as impose crippling regulations on business by forcing them to employ US workers before immigrants.

[The Daily Signal](#) this week also [looks](#) at whether or not military chaplains should be forced to conduct same-sex weddings. They argue that it is vital to recognize the religious freedom for military chaplains, which includes the ability for them to express their religion according to the dictates of their own conscience.

While the House and Senate were on their recess holiday this week, they still managed to make the news. [According](#) to [Roll Call's 218](#), Trey Gowdy (R-SC), who heads the House committee investigating the 2012 attack on the US diplomatic compound in Benghazi, is looking forward to a 'marathon' hearing in October when Hillary

Clinton is due to appear before the panel.

Speaking of the Senate, *Roll Call's #WGDB* [writes](#) Tuesday that Senate Democrats have come together to say that Republican leaders should not wait until after Labor Day to begin budget talks. They comment that there will be only 23 days to make a deal before the end of the fiscal year when Congress returns. On Thursday, *PoliticusUSA* [reports](#) that momentum is growing for Senate Democrats to be able to defeat Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's (KY) efforts to pass a motion of disapproval for the recent Iran nuclear agreement.

Foreign policy, defense and trade

On Sunday this week, *Political Animal* [looks](#) at what they call 'the Obama method' of strategy, and how it applies to the Middle East. They say that Obama's strategy is to use negotiation to strengthen his own position, and split that of his adversaries with conciliatory rhetoric. *Informed Comment* meanwhile [discusses](#) non-violent options that the US could use to defeat ISIL, including shoring up democracy in nearby countries such as Tunisia, and ending the use of drones and the killing of civilians.

The Daily Signal [says](#) that the recently concluded deal with Iran over that country's nuclear program is wrong, and makes war more likely. They argue that in 15 years, Iran will be free to do what it wants – including going nuclear. *The Atlantic*, meanwhile, [says](#) that the Iran deal is like the ill-fated Munich Agreement of 1938 – but not for the reasons that most people think it is.

Obamacare and health policy

On Monday this week, *RedState* [discusses](#) what they say is Obamacare's \$1,200 a year 'wife tax'. They say that new data has shown that companies are adding surcharges of \$100 per month or more to the plans of the wives and husbands of workers in order to avoid the Affordable Care Act's tax on rich benefit plans, which may force workers' spouses to seek coverage elsewhere. *The Conscience of a Liberal*, meanwhile [argues](#) that the claim from many conservatives that Obamacare's Medicaid expansion won't work should be dropped given the large fall in the number of people who lack insurance. Tuesday



Wisconsin Governor, Scott Walker Credit: Chatham House (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

sees GOP presidential candidate (and Wisconsin Governor) Scott Walker detail how he would replace Obamacare. *Post Politics* [reports](#) that Walker's replacement plan involves reducing regulation to lower health insurance costs and providing tax credits to offset the cost of private insurance plans.

In recent months, Congress has seen several stalled efforts to defund Planned Parenthood – *Daily Kos* [writes](#) Wednesday that these attempts have spread to red states such as Utah and Arkansas, who are also investigating the nonprofit.

The economy and society

On Sunday, *Daily Kos* [argues](#) that even if Congress was to enact legislation abolishing mandatory minimum prison sentences, this would do little to reduce the country's incarceration rate. They comment that even if all prisoners convicted of drug offenses were released, the US would still have the highest incarceration rate in the

world.

The Federalist [writes](#) Thursday on why police reform is needed, arguing that in many parts of the country, the police no longer work for the people. They say that the first step would be to implement and enforce a zero-tolerance policy for the abuses of power so often made by police, with swift sanctions for officers proven to be in the wrong.

On Saturday, *The Daily Signal* [says](#) that the rapid growth of welfare spending is being driven by the growing eligibility of people above the poverty line for higher benefits, and the lack of incentives to steward the federal programs that they administer wisely.

The Atlantic [looks](#) at the results of a new study that suggests that couples in Republican counties are more satisfied with their married lives. They say that the finding may be more to do with the types of communities that people live in, rather than how they vote.

Is going to college a pathway to higher wages and wealth for Hispanics and African Americans? Apparently not, according to a new study [discussed](#) by *Wonkblog* this week, which finds that graduates from these groups typically fared worse in times of financial turmoil.

And finally...

Federal Eye [reminds us](#) that the federal government is keen to get more reviews on Yelp.

The Fix [looks](#) at who was winning the presidential race, four, eight and 12 years ago.

The top Republican presidential candidates in many states are being beaten by 'Deez Nuts' [writes](#) *FreakOutNation*.

Featured [image](#) of Donald Trump, credit: [Michael Vadon](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-SA-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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