

Upstate New York's secession plans, North Carolina's budget woes, and North Dakota okays armed drones: US state blog round up for 22 – 28 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

This week in the Bay State, *Blue Mass Group* [looks](#) at what they call the 'Massachusetts police state', citing examples of minorities being harassed with little police action taking place in response.

Moving on to Rhode Island, *RI Future* [writes](#) Thursday on how the smallest state in the US now has the smallest uninsured rate, at 2.7 percent. They write that the state's health insurance exchange, Healthsource, has made it very easy for people to sign up for coverage, regardless of income.

New York State's *State of Politics* this week [reports](#) on a coalition of groups who support gun rights and fracking efforts to secede a part of the state. They say that the groups have been angered by Albany's ban on fracking in the state as well as recent gun control measures pushed through by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Heading south to New Jersey, *Save Jersey fact checks* Governor Chris Christie's claim that he stood up to the state's 'Democratic machine'. They say that looking at Christie's record as governor, he has actually co-opted the Democratic machine in the state, mostly by forging tactical alliances with Democratic mayors and bosses in order to help him gain reelection in 2013.

PoliticsPA [reports](#) that the Keystone State has launched online voter registration, which will make it much easier to register to vote, be much safer in terms of personal information, and will also be much cheaper.

Staying in Pennsylvania, *Raging Chicken Press* has the [news](#) that a GOP

representative, Ryan Warner, wants to make English the official state language in order to save some money in the state's budget.



New Jersey Governor Credit: Gage Skidmore (CC-BY-SA-2.0)

South

In North Carolina, *Civitas Review* [writes](#) that the chances that there will be a budget deal before the state's August 31st deadline is now very slim. They write that while state House and Senate leaders, along with Governor Pat McCrory have agreed on the budget's size – \$21.7 billion – there is still disagreement on spending targets in areas of the state's government. Staying in the Old North State, *The Progressive Pulse* [says](#) of the budget deal that it is likely to contain another round of tax cuts for large corporations. They argue that there is no evidence that such tax cuts lead to prosperity through improved wages or higher economic growth.

Moving down to Florida, *Saint Peters blog* [reports](#) that while state lawmakers have been unable to agree on

congressional redistricting recently, they have agreed that muzzling the state's Supreme Court is a good idea. The Florida Supreme Court had previously declared that the current Congressional map amounted to gerrymandering, something that state legislators have since referred to as judicial overreach. *Shark Tank* also [writes](#) on Florida's redistricting travails, commenting on Tuesday that potential Congressional candidates are 'locked into a holding pattern', with many incumbents unsure as to which district they will be representing.

On Sunday, *Left in Alabama* has the [news](#) that Alabama is number four among states whose residents spend the most at Walmart, with the average Alabaman spending nearly \$1,500 per year at the chain.

On Thursday, *The Arkansas Times* [writes](#) that GOP Governor Asa Hutchinson is finding it hard to govern the Natural State despite having majorities in both legislative houses. Hutchinson has been fighting an ongoing battle with the far-right of the state's GOP over how Medicaid funding is apportioned.

Midwest

Ohio's *Plunderbund* this week [wonders](#) if the state's Governor, John Kasich really understands economics. They comment that Ohio ranks 29th in the country in terms of job creation despite Kasich's belief in the trickle down concept of supply-side economics.

Heading up to Michigan, *eclectablog* [says](#) this week that the state's Republican Party has shown an abject failure of leadership for its failure to decide how to pay for critical infrastructure repairs to roads and bridges, as well as a blackmailing scandal between two GOP Representatives.

Project Illinois [looks](#) this week at the state of women's equality in the Prairie State. They say that while the state came third in terms of women's inequality in a recent study, that doesn't mean things are good for women there; for example, 40 percent of full-time working women in Illinois earn less than \$35,000 a year.

On Wednesday, *Bleeding Heartland* [says](#) that Iowa's Medicaid privatization is raising some red flags after it was revealed that all four private companies that are currently negotiating contracts to manage the scheme have previously faced charges of fraud or mismanagement relating to serving Medicaid recipients in other states.

Heading up to North Dakota, *Say Anything blog* [has the news](#) that armed drones are now legal in the Peace Garden State. They say that while drones weapons must be non-deadly, they can still be fitted with an 80,000 volt taser or even rubber bullets.

West and Pacific

Earlier this month, there was a large waste water spill in the Gold King Mine in Colorado. *Colorado Peak Politics* has a

[guide](#) to what they say is the Environmental Protection Agency's cover-up of the disaster after the agency



Hovering drone Credit: Andrew (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

'dumped' nearly 100 redacted documents relating to the mine last Friday night. Staying in the Centennial State, *The Spot* [reports](#) on the state Republican Party's decision to cancel its presidential poll at its 2016 caucus. The decision has raised some questions and some are now claiming that the state party has misinterpreted how the GOP's new national rules for nominations work.

Moving down to Arizona, *Blog for Arizona* [writes](#) Wednesday that a state Superior Court Judge has surprisingly ruled in favor of Governor Jan Brewer's plan to expand Medicaid in the state. The case apparently hinged on whether or not a hospital assessment that lawmakers approved to fund the expansion counted as a tax or a fee, with the judge ruling that it was the latter.

In the Golden State this week, *Fox & Hounds* [writes](#) that in order for the state's Republican Party to be competitive once again, it must change the hearts and minds of suburban and minority voters by becoming the party of reform and good governance. The state's GOP currently has 28 of 80 seats in the State Assembly and 14 of 40 in the Senate.

On Monday, *Strange Bedfellows* has the [news](#) that three major national gun rights groups, along with local gun dealers have sued Seattle's City Council to block a new \$25 local tax on firearms enacted earlier this month. The pro-gun lobby has called the levy a 'poll tax on gun owners and retailers'.

Heading out to the Aloha State, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [writes](#) this week that a new study has shown that Honolulu is the most expensive city in America for singles.

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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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