

Florida's tepid 2016 Senate race, Minnesota and Wisconsin's policy battle, and Hawaii's homeless emergency: US state blog round up for 10 – 16 October

USAPP Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson**, looks at the week in US state blogging. [Click here](#) for our weekly roundup of national blogs.

Northeast

On Tuesday this week, *NH Labor News* [writes](#) that reforms to the state budget of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) are needed. They say that over the past thirteen years, the TANF has only increased 12 percent, despite child care and housing costs for TANF families rising at a much higher rate over the same period.

RIPR [says](#) on Friday that it may well be time for Ocean State's former governor, Lincoln Chafee to give up on his 2016 presidential ambitions, after what they describe as a 'bumbling appearance' during this week's Democratic debate. They also comment that while some of Chafee's critics have accused him of embarrassing Rhode Island, there are many other politicians from the state who have landed in jail or made the state a national laughing stock.

In the Constitution State this week, *My Left Nutmeg* has the [news](#) that a recent poll has shown that Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy isn't very popular; voters disapprove of the job he's doing 58 to 32 percent.

Moving on to New York, *State of Politics* [reports](#) that the state's Comptroller, Tom DiNapoli has agreed that the state will get out of the private, for-profit prison business, by essentially divesting its Common Retirement Fund of shares in GEO Group – the largest private prison company in the world.

In the Garden State this week, *PolitickerNJ* [looks](#) at the New Jersey Republican Party, which they say is floundering. They write that the party has raised few funds in competitive districts and is suffering from scandals and infighting, problems which are likely worse given Governor Chris Christie's focus on his presidential campaign, rather than uniting the state party.

Speaking of the 2016 election cycle, Pennsylvania's *PoliticsPA* [writes](#) this week that the state's Senate Democratic primary is wide open according to a new poll. Former Congressman, Joe Sestak is in the lead at 29 percent, but is followed by Katie McGinty, ex Chief of Staff of Governor Tom Wolf at 22 percent. More than 1/3rd of voters are undecided.



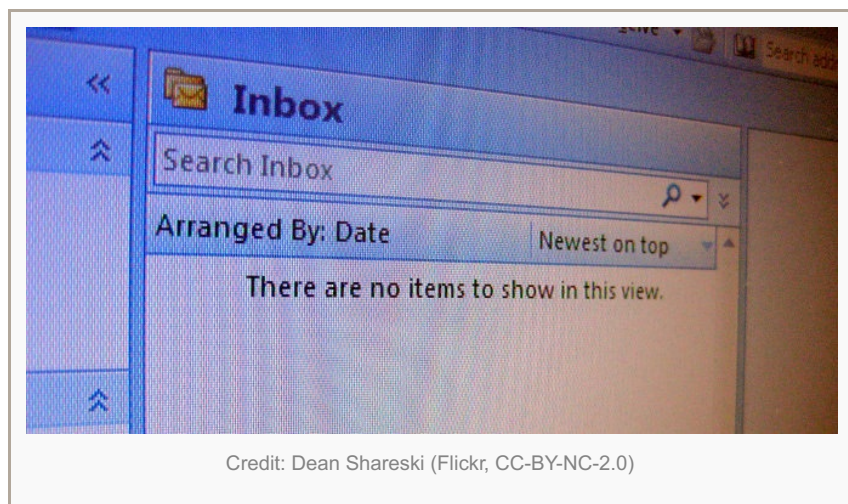
New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie Credit: Gage Skidmore (CC-BY-SA-2.0)

South

On Monday, North Carolina's *The Progressive Pulse* has the [news](#) that the state's infant mortality rate increased in 2014, with 7.1 deaths per live births – and is still higher than the national average of 6 per 1000. They say that African-American babies face poorer than average incomes, with 12.8 deaths per 1000 births.

Moving down to the Sunshine State, *The Shark Tank* [argues](#) that Florida's 2016 US Senate race will not mimic its

'epic' 2010 race. They say that none of the GOP's candidates have yet distinguished themselves as current Senator Marco Rubio's heir.



Credit: Dean Shareski (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-2.0)

Former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, has been in the news a great deal because of her use of a private email server for government business. It turns out that Alabama Governor, Alan Bentley has also been using a private email address. *Yellowhammer* [says](#) that Bentley has never used a state government email account, but also that he does most of his business over the phone or face to face.

Mississippi's *Cottonmouth* [says](#) that the state's Governor, Phil Bryant's claims about his economic record are not to be trusted – there are now 22,000 fewer Mississippians with jobs compared to when he and the GOP took control of the state's government. The state also has a high unemployment rate compared to the rest of the country, and is also facing a \$30 million budget shortfall.

Moving west, *Louisiana Voice* [writes](#) Monday on the state's gubernatorial race. They comment that Senator David Vitter is trying to buy the election through his SuperPAC, 'Funds for Louisiana's Future', and increasingly resembles the current Governor, Bobby Jindal in his refusal to attend unscripted events and engage in real policy debates.

On Friday, *Burnt Orange Report* [says](#) that the Lone Star State is denying birth certificates to American children based on the immigration status of their parents. Some of these parents have brought a lawsuit against the state so that they can get their children's birth certificates.

Midwest

This week, Michigan's *Eclecta blog* [writes](#) on the state's Emergency Managers who have been charged with improving the fortunes of some of the state's cities and school districts. They say that many of the state's Emergency Managers have done little, with schools and cities often doing worse under their watch.

Heading down to the Hoosier State, *Indy Democrat blog* [says](#) that Governor Mike Pence's newly announced \$1 billion infrastructure package has done little to placate his critics. They report that the state's Democrats have argued that the package is the bare minimum that's needed to maintain the state's 'D+' infrastructure system.

In Wisconsin this week, *The Political Environment* has the [news](#) that a Federal District Court has upheld the basic Ojibwe hunting rights in treaties which have been in force since the 1800s. They say that the tribe's rights have been under challenge and outright attack in recent years.

Bleeding Heartland of Iowa [reports](#) on Monday that the state's Department of Revenue and Finance has proposed new rules which will effectively give a tax cut worth tens of millions to Iowa manufacturers. Their concern is that the rules are a serious breach of executive power, given that they will go into effect in January if there is no legislative response.

Over in the Mount Rushmore State, *Dakota Free Press* [writes](#) that the relatively low rate of inflation in the state means that there will be no cost of living increase in Social Security checks next year, and that the state's

minimum wage will increase by 5 cents. The latter would have otherwise risen by 1.7 cents, but for a voter-approved initiative that sees such wage increases rounded up to the nearest nickel.



Credit: Ken Teegardin (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

On Friday, Minnesota's *True North* [says](#) that there is a policy battle ongoing between the state's Governor, Mark Dayton, and Governor Scott Walker of neighboring Wisconsin. They say that while the states are very similar in terms of population and economy, Dayton has raised taxes and increased spending and the minimum wage, while Walker has essentially done the opposite. They argue that Dayton has little to brag about given that the state's economy began pulling ahead of Wisconsin's in 2000, given that Dayton only became governor in 2011.

West and Pacific

This week *Colorado Peak Politics* [reports](#) that the Centennial State's health cooperative, ColoradoHealthOP has been 'essentially' shut down by the state's Division of Insurance, leaving 80,000 people in need of insurance. They say that the federal government has basically defaulted on its promises to support the co-op.

Heading southwest, *Blog for Arizona* [says](#) that rather than calling for a huge wall to be built on the Mexico/Arizona border, billionaire presidential candidate Donald Trump would be better off supporting economic development assistance to support Mexico's flagging private sector.

On the weekend, California Governor, Jerry Brown, signed a law which would allow eligible Californians to be automatically registered to vote when they renew a driver's licence. *Fox & Hounds* [argues](#) that while making it easier to vote is a first step, actually inspiring them to vote is another. *Flash Report* meanwhile [says](#) that Brown has undermined the rule of law in the Golden State by allowing illegal immigrants to vote, reducing prison time, and releasing dangerous offenders.

Out in Hawaii this week, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [reports](#) that the Aloha State's Governor, David Ige, declared a State of Emergency for homelessness, which will allow him to tap into emergency state funds usually reserved for disaster relief.

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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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