

Little interest in New Jersey's elections, Texas' 'abysmal' vaccination rate, and Illinois' Rauner doubles down on anti-union policies: US state blog round up for 24 – 30 October

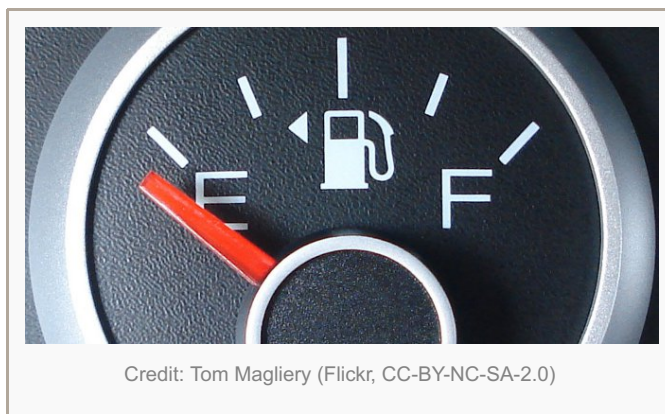
USAPP Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson**, looks at the week in US state blogging. [Click here](#) for our weekly roundup of national blogs.

Northeast

On Monday, *Maine Progressives Warehouse* [reports](#) that the state's Republican Governor, Paul LePage claimed in a recent town hall meeting that it is unconstitutional for the Pine Tree State to pay for education, and that the state would never fund education at 55 percent, as is desired by teachers' unions.

Heading south to the Green Mountain State, *VTDigger* [writes](#) this week that state lawmakers are pushing for a statewide tax on carbon dioxide emissions. They comment that the proposed carbon tax would increase Vermont's gas prices by as much as 88 cents a gallon. They also comment that given Vermont's relatively small size, it would be better for New England to institute the tax as a region.

In New York this week, *State of Politics* has the [news](#) that the mayor of New York, after some contemplation, has decided to endorse former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, as the Democrats' presidential nominee. The move comes after several months in which de Blasio was coy over who he would endorse.



New Jersey Governor (and GOP presidential nominee hopeful), Chris Christie was in the news this week after he was apparently kicked out of an Amtrak train's silent car for 'screaming' into his cellphone. *Save Jersey* [says](#) that a liberal blogger who was there has claimed that the story is inaccurate – Christie wasn't screaming, and was quite happy to move when spoken to by a conductor. Staying in the Garden State, *PolitickerNJ* [writes](#) Tuesday that according to a new poll $\frac{3}{4}$ of New Jersey residents are unaware that any elections are to be held in the state next week, and only 5 percent are able to name their state senator correctly.

Looking west to Pennsylvania, *PoliticsPA* has the [news](#) that only 36 percent of those in the Keystone State think that Governor Tom Wolf is doing a good or excellent job. They also say that more than half of those surveyed blame the state legislature for having no budget, with only 32 percent holding Governor Wolf responsible for the delay.

South

Voters in Virginia go to the polls next week to elect the Old Dominion's State's Senate and House of Delegates. *Bearing Drift* [writes](#) that the state's Democrats are desperate, and that there is little chance that they will have a majority in the State Senate after next week.

Heading down to North Carolina, *The Progressive Pulse* [says](#) that racial profiling by the state's law enforcement officers needs to end, after a front page story in the New York Times last week exposed the widespread practice of traffic stops and arrests disproportionately aimed at people of color in the state.

In the Sunshine State, *Saint Peters blog* [reports](#) that the Florida Senate narrowly approved a new map for its 40 senate district. The map now moves to the House, with some lawmakers stating that there were doubts that it would pass there.

Mississippi's *Y'all Politics* [writes](#) this week that ahead of the state's general and gubernatorial election this coming Tuesday, the state's Republican Party are ramping up their rhetoric on the flying of the state flag by publicly funder universities. The comments come after the University of Mississippi removed the state flag from its campus because it included the Confederate flag emblem.

Next week also sees elections in Louisiana. *Graft, Lies & Politics* [says](#) that GOP gubernatorial candidate, David Vitter has launched his first attack against his Democratic rival, State Representative, John Bel Edwards, with an ad attacking Edwards' character and integrity.

Moving up to Oklahoma, *The Okie* [comments](#) that despite three recent botched execution attempts, which led to a star-ordered ban, most Oklahomans (67 percent) are still in favor of the death penalty.

Texas' *Burnt Orange Report* [argues](#) Thursday that the Lone Star State's 'abysmal' vaccination rate is putting the state's children and adults at risk of a preventable epidemic. Only 64 percent of Texas children are fully immunized, down 8 percent since 2013.

Midwest

On Wednesday, *Eclecta blog* of Michigan [talks](#) on what they say is the 'epic fail' of the state's Republicans on road funding. They say that more than four years after Governor Rick Snyder called for a major increase in road funding, the Senate has adjourned without a vote on a \$1.2 billion House roads package.

Down in the Prairie State, *Progress Illinois* [reports](#) that GOP Governor Bruce Rauner has 'doubled down' on his push to get anti-union policies passed as a condition to ending the state's ongoing budget stalemate. Illinois has been without a budget since July 1st.

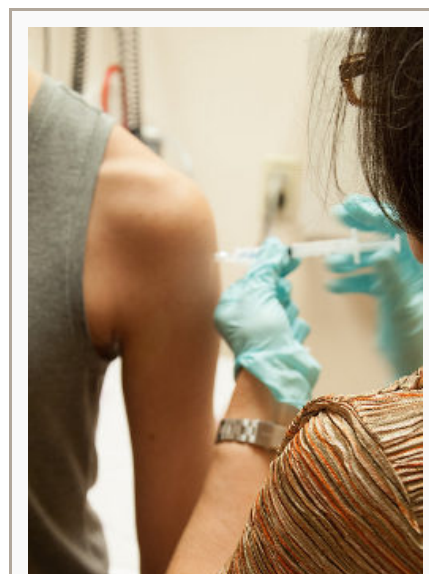
In Minnesota this week, *MN Progressive Project* [looks](#) at what they say are the hidden costs of not paying state legislators enough. They argue that compensation of \$31,000 for four month's work, combined with a grueling application process, leads to inconsistent public service work by legislators across the state.

On Monday, *Say Anything blog* [examines](#) whether or not the Peace Garden State has reached the bottom of its oil downturn. They say that while the fall in drilling activity in North Dakota had leveled out, oil production has hardly faltered.

Nebraska is unique in the US in that it has a unicameral state legislature. *Leavenworth Street* [warns](#) that the state's system is not a good one, as it allows programs to be 'rammed through' – such as the state's recent death penalty ban – even though voters do not want them.

West and Pacific

On Monday, *Colorado Peak Politics* [comments](#) that Governor John Hickenlooper is acting like a 'king', by suing the state's Attorney General because he disagrees with her joining with 23 other states to challenge the federal



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Illinois Governor, Bruce Rauner Credit: Steven Vance (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

Environmental Protection Agency's latest regulations against CO2 emissions. *The Spot*, meanwhile has [the top three questions](#) facing Governor Hickenlooper's 2017 budget proposal, which he will outline next week.

Moving down to the Grand Canyon State, *Blog for Arizona* [looks](#) at what's holding back the state's economic development. They say that one reason is that the state's retirees as a voting bloc are refusing to approve funding for things such as education and infrastructure improvements.

In the Golden State this week, *Fox & Hounds* [wonders](#) if California can be saved, given increasing crime rates – Los Angeles has apparently seen a near 21 percent rise in violent crimes over the first half of 2015 – and the state's fifth year of catastrophic drought. Staying in California, *The Left Hook* has the [news](#) that Mountain View in the San Francisco Bay Area, has decided to raise its minimum wage to \$15 by 2018, and to tie future increases to the regional Consumer Price Index (CPI). They say that by linking increased to the regional CPI, Silicon Valley's cities will ensure that their minimum wage workers do not fall behind further economically.



Heading out to the Aloha State, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [reports](#) that Hawaii has paid \$500,000 to dead people in pensions over five years, according to a new study.

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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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