

Rubio tops GOP debate at Jeb's expense, Ryan becomes Speaker, and Congress's bipartisan budget deal: US national blog round up for 24 – 30 October

USAPP Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson** looks at the best in political blogging from around the Beltway. Our roundup of state political blogging will follow over the weekend.

Jump to:

[Elections and the road to 2016](#)

[The Democrats' 2016 campaign](#)

[The Republican Party's 2016 campaign](#)

[The GOP's 3rd debate](#)

[Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda](#)

[Paul Ryan and the House Speakership](#)

[Foreign policy, defense and trade](#)

[Obamacare and health policy](#)

[The economy and society](#)

President Obama, the Democratic Party, and the GOP

On Monday this week, *Townhall* [writes](#) that women have actually suffered more under President Obama's policies. They argue that working women have been 'crushed' by steeper declines in take home pay than men, and sharper declines in employment and a faster rise in poverty.

A recent article by Matt Yglesias of *Vox* suggested that the Democratic Party was in deep trouble, especially in down-ticket races. *Mischiefs of Faction* [disagrees](#) – arguing that the party's problems are similar to those which happen to all parties who have held the White House for two terms.



Credit: sobyrne99 (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

Turning now to the Republican Party, *The Federalist* [comments](#) that the even though the Tea Party movement seems to keep winning – such as getting a House Speaker 'upgrade' from Kevin McCarthy to Paul Ryan – they still aren't happy. On similar lines, *The Hill's Congress blog* [says](#) that the GOP is being plagued by the 'Tea Party

monster' of its own creation. *Red State* looks at the issue from the other side, [writing](#) Tuesday that the 'Establishment' wing of the Republican Party, as exemplified by the Bush family, are out of touch with those in the party's base who feel frustrated and dissatisfied with the status quo.

Elections and the road to 2016

This week *Political Animal* gives an update on the '[endorsement primary](#)'. Democrat, and former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, dominates the primary with 373 endorsement 'points'. Her closest rival is Vermont Senator, Bernie Sanders, with 2. On the GOP side, former Florida Governor has 36 endorsement points, with New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie in second place with 25.

The Democrats' 2016 campaign



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

Moving on to the Democrats' primary campaign, *Post Politics* [says](#) on Wednesday that a war of words is heating up among the presidential hopefuls. They say that Bernie Sanders has become more aggressive, questioning Hillary Clinton's record on gay rights, climate change, and Wall Street reform. *Wonkblog* looks at [another fight](#) within the Democratic Party – this time over economics. They say that one side of the party – the centrists- think that the rules of the economy have been rigged against workers, while the 'Third Way' side argues that middle-class stagnation is a result of globalization. Turning to the Democratic candidates themselves:

- Clinton's claims that the National Rifle Association represents gun manufacturers and sellers are a lie, [writes](#)
- Clinton's new Iowa poll numbers – she is up 41 points – are crazy, good ([The Fix](#))
- What Clinton said on her recent appearance on the Stephen Colbert show, versus what she might have meant to say ([Wonkblog](#)).
- Bernie Sanders appears to have decided to run for president ([Red State](#)).

The Republican Party's 2016 campaign

This week was another important one for the Republican's presidential primary, with the third debate held Wednesday night in Colorado. On Tuesday, *American Thinker* [wonders](#) if the 'perfect conservative' candidate might cost the GOP the election. They give the example of Florida Senator, Marco Rubio, who has received flak for changing his position on illegal immigration. *Wonkblog* meanwhile [looks](#) at the record of every governor and former governor running for the GOP's nomination, finding that despite many of their claims of success, only Ohio's John Kasich, Jeb Bush, and Virginia's Jim Gilmore can claim to have lead their states to better than expected economic performance. Later in the week, *The Atlantic* [examines](#) whether or not the GOP candidates' radically simplified tax plans – such as Ben Carson's 10 percent flat tax plan – would actually work.

On Wednesday, *FiveThirtyEight* [says](#) that the GOP may well be in disarray, given the recent dysfunction over choosing a new House Speaker, and given that the party is having a hard time choosing a presidential nominee. *The Atlantic* echoes this, [arguing](#) that as the Democratic Party has seemed to reach a consensus towards Hillary

Clinton, the Republican Party remains divided with the outsider candidates dominating the field overall. Disarray or none, the Republican Party begins every election cycle with structural advantages over the Democrats, [says The American Prospect](#).

Sabato's Crystal Ball provides a good [overview](#) of the Republican field on Thursday, putting Marco Rubio at the top of their list of the 'semi-traditional' nominees.

The GOP's 3rd debate

Political commentary this week was naturally dominated by the Republican Party's 3rd debate on Wednesday evening. In the debate lead up:

- With falling poll ratings and accusations of having a disappointing narrative, no-one had more on the line than Jeb Bush ([The Fix](#)).
- Some argued that 'margin of error' candidates such as Chris Christie should not be allowed on the debate stage ([The Federalist](#)).
- *Hit & Run* has [five things to watch for](#).

In the aftermath of the debate:

- Marco Rubio 'owned' Jeb Bush after Bush went after the Florida Senator's absence from Washington DC ([The Fix](#)).
- Former Hewlett-Packard executive, Carly Fiorina made a flawed criticism of the effects of President Obama's policies on women ([Wonkblog](#)).
- Texas Senator Ted Cruz's tirade against the media was likely a 'pre-planned hit' ([Daily Kos](#))...
- ... in what was a very, very good night for him ([Red State](#)).
- Jeb Bush did not have the debate he needed – not even close ([Post Politics](#))
- For some, Marco Rubio and Chris Christie were the winners ([Outside the Beltway](#)).
- [The Federalist](#) has the best tweets from the debate.
- The debate was bad, bad, bad ([Americablog](#)).

Moving on to the various GOP candidates' weeks outside of the debate, and starting with the race's *enfant terrible*:

Donald Trump

- The Donald began the week by trolling Ben Carson, calling him 'super low on energy' ([Red State](#)).
- He's also led the GOP race for 100 days as of this week ([The Fix](#)).
- Despite tweeting this week that the Ford motor company had abandoned plans to construct a \$2.5 billion factory in Mexico because of his criticism, Ford is actually going to go ahead with the factory's construction ([Post Politics](#)).
- Things weren't easy for Trump when he started out – he only had a loan of \$1 million from his father ([The Fix](#)).
- Carson pulled ahead of Trump in the polls on Tuesday – is this Trump's first real campaign crisis? ([Red State](#)).



Jeb Bush Credit: Gage Skidmore (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Jeb Bush

- Is it time for Jeb Bush to end his campaign? ([Red State](#))
- Bush's loss is democracy's gain ([The Atlantic](#)).
- Bush fell out with France this week after some of his debate comments – and now the White House is involved ([Post Politics](#)).
- With Bush's poor debate showing – can we now finally say goodbye to his family's dynasty? ([The Atlantic](#)).

Marco Rubio

- Is Marco Rubio – who was on the upswing this week – the Republicans' John Edwards ([Political Animal](#))

Ben Carson

- Does the Republican Party know what it's getting into with Ben Carson? He's likely to be at least as catastrophic for the party as Donald Trump ([Talking Points Memo](#))
- Carson is both raising and spending huge amounts of cash – but where's it all going? ([The Atlantic](#)).
- Carson would be very happy to overturn Roe v Wade with no exceptions for rape or incest ([Daily Kos](#)).
- While Carson has passed Trump in a national poll, the real story is how far out in front of the GOP pack they both are ([The Fix](#)).

Ted Cruz

Texas Senator Ted Cruz also had a very good week, mostly based on his debate performance:

- *Townhall* has [20 of his best quotes](#)
- Is Cruz the most likely Republican nominee in 2016 ([The Federalist](#))?
- Well, he is running the best campaign of any presidential candidate ([The Fix](#)).
- His path to the nomination may be to unite all of the angriest voters behind him ([Daily Kos](#)).
- Cruz apparently managed to raise \$1.1 million in the 24 hours after the debate ([Post Politics](#)).

The rest

- South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham can't get over the fact that he is losing the GOP nomination race to someone who wanted to 'kill someone' – Ben Carson ([Crooks & Liars](#)).
- That said, people are interested in Graham, at least when he discusses his family ([The Fix](#)).

- Ohio Governor John Kasich is similarly dismayed at the state of the GOP and the conservative movement given the rise of Carson and Trump ([Crooks & Liars](#)).
- There is no way that New Jersey Governor Chris Christie should be in anyone's final six remaining GOP contenders ([No more mister nice blog](#)).
- Christie also claimed this week that the government has 'stolen' voters Social Security money ([Crooks & Liars](#)).



Ted Cruz Credit: Gage Skidmore (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda

On Thursday, *Federal Eye* [considers](#) a proposal from Democratic presidential candidate, Bernie Sanders, that the Post Office should also be a bank. They say that providing financial services from post offices could benefit nearly 70 million Americans, but that there is no interest from the postal service at the moment.

While the big news this week was Congressman Paul Ryan's (R-WI) journey towards the House Speakership, *Red State* [looks](#) at the race to take his last job, the Chair of the important and influential Ways and Means Committee. They say that there are three main candidates for the job, Pat Tiberi (R-OH), Kevin Brady (R-TX), and Devin Nunes (R-CA).

This was House Speaker John A. Boehner's final week in the job. One of his last acts was to negotiate a deal with the White House to increase the debt limit and set a two-year budget deal, [reports](#) *The Left Coaster*. On Wednesday, *Monkey Cage* has [four and half takeaways](#) from the deal, including that it has no long-range plan, and that bipartisan deals are possible, even with extreme polarization. Speaking of polarization, *Powerline* [argues](#) that Republicans should reject the deal given that it was negotiated behind closed doors and would increase federal spending by \$80 billion over two years.



Former Speaker of the House John Boehner Credit: Gage Skidmore (CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Caffeinated Politics [says](#) that in another victory for bi-partisanship, the House also voted this week to revive the Export-Import bank, despite right-wing conservative's desire to kill the legislation which they argue encourages corporate welfare. Speaking of bi-partisanship, *The Fix* [looks](#) at five times when Democrats came to the rescue of Speaker Boehner, including the 2013 fiscal cliff, and raising the debt ceiling in 2014.

Moving on to the Senate, *The Fix* has eight reasons why Marco Rubio was correct when he said that [it stinks](#). But should Rubio resign his Senate seat given that he has missed so many votes due to his presidential campaigning? *Outside the Beltway* [comments](#) that Rubio isn't really missing many more votes than many other candidates who ran for president in 2008 in roughly the same period.

What is the Senate's Byrd Rule, which is likely to kill a House bill to repeal Obamacare and defund Planned Parenthood? *Mischiefs of Faction* [has all the information you need](#).

Paul Ryan and the House Speakership

On Tuesday, *Outside the Beltway* reports that Paul Ryan has [blasted](#) the budget deal process – but is actually pleased it has happened, given that it will not be his problem by the time he takes the Speaker’s chair. And despite his disliking of the process – he will support the deal, [writes](#) *The Daily Signal*.



Speaker Paul D. Ryan Credit: Gage Skidmore (Creative Commons BY SA)

By Wednesday, Paul Ryan had won the GOP’s nomination for Speaker – *Powerline* [says](#) that he is already selling out by supporting the Boehner-Obama budget deal. *America blog* reports Thursday that Ryan was elected as Speaker by the House, and [warns](#) that the position could destroy him just as it did Boehner. It’s unlikely that Ryan will be able to fix the House; given how broken it is (*The Fix*). Speaker Paul D. Ryan will embrace the Hastert Rule as Speaker – *Crooks & Liars* [looks](#) at what the rule’s return means.

Foreign policy, defense and trade

Informed Comment [reports](#) this week that the US deployed its elite forces to 147 countries in 2015. But are they effective?

This week the US Navy planned to send a destroyer warship into the South China Sea as a show of force against China’s ambitions in the area. *The American Interest* [says](#) that they will believe that the US will take action when they see it. *The Daily Signal* [writes](#) that the destroyer’s patrol (which did end up occurring) should be only the beginning of sustained freedom of navigation operations.

On Tuesday, *Crooks & Liars* [looks](#) at what they say is ‘another secret trade deal’ – the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the US and the EU. They argue that the negotiations need to be more transparent on the US side, especially since the EU is publishing its own proposals.

Red State [writes](#) this week on what they say is President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry’s acceleration of the collapse of American power in the Middle East, which has led to Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia looking to Russia for leadership.

Obamacare and health policy

With the collapse of several of its cooperatives, is Obamacare spiraling downwards? *Powerline* [thinks so](#). *The Daily Signal*, meanwhile, [writes](#) that in 2016, Obamacare’s premiums are set to rise by 7.5 percent – and that Oklahoma will actually see a rise of 36 percent.

The economy and society



Credit: Niklas Morberg (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-2.)

On Monday this week, *Monkey Cage* [looks](#) at the recent announcement by the Federal Communications Commission that it will be capping the rates of prison phone calls within and between states to \$1.65 for most calls. They say that while this reduction will help prisoners' families, they often have to pay up in other ways, such as spending large amount sending supplies to prisoners and even to see them. *Wonkblog*, meanwhile [writes](#) that one in nine black children now have a parent in prison. *The Volokh Conspiracy* this week [writes](#) on the often extraordinary lengths that states go to in order to obtain execution drugs, including hiring outside lawyers to help them to get drugs from overseas.

The Atlantic this week has an important story on how America's middle class unions are ' [basically dead](#)'. They say that the current low rates of private sector unionization means that more than 20 percent of jobs pay less than the median wage, and that the US ranks in the bottom third of countries in terms of work-life balance.

Senator Bernie Sanders this week announced that he supported removing marijuana from the government's list of the most dangerous drugs. *The Fix* says that the announcement is a [big political moment for pot](#).

In the week in which a graphic video emerged of a white police officer arresting a black girl at a high school in South Carolina, *The Atlantic* asks, [why are police disciplining students?](#)

Featured image, Florida Senator Marco Rubio Credit: Gage Skidmore (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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