

## Shutdown avoided as debt limit fight looms, Trumpcare, and the GOP's glass ceiling: US national blog round up for 26 September – 2 October

USAPP Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson** looks at the best in political blogging from around the Beltway. Our round-up of state blogs will follow later this weekend.

### [Elections and the road to 2016](#)

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

[Foreign policy, defense and trade](#)

[Obamacare and health policy](#)

[The economy and society](#)

[And finally...](#)

### President Obama, the Democratic Party, and the GOP

On Wednesday this week, *The Hill's Congress Blog* [reports](#) that President Obama has redesigned the visa process to make it easier for foreign tech staff to work in the US – many of whom are currently on temporary visas. They say that the wait times for Indians moving on to work permits will be dramatically slashed in order to appease the tech lobby.

Thursday saw another tragic mass shooting – this time at a community college in Oregon. In response, President Obama gave an impassioned speech, calling for 'simple' gun laws which could have prevented the shooting. *Hit & Run* [says](#) that in his speech, Obama did not mention any specific new laws that he wants which could have prevented the mass shooting, nor did he mention the Second Amendment, which is one reason why restricting gun access is so difficult.

Moving on to the Republican Party, *Informed Comment* [ponders](#) this week whether the party needs the Muslim vote, after GOP presidential contender, Dr. Ben Carson stated that he felt that a Muslim should not be president. They say that Muslim Americans are not one issue voters, and that whoever does get the GOP's nomination is likely to reach out to Muslims in the lead-up to the election. In a similar vein, *The Fix* [comments](#) that the US is rapidly diversifying and that this is something that the Republican Party and its members uneasy about.

On Monday, *RedState* [looks](#) at why conservatives are so angry at the GOP's leadership. They say that the wider party feels this way because the Republican Congressional leadership promised that there would be major accomplishments once the party gained control over the Senate – something that has not come to pass due to President Obama's veto power.

### Elections and the road to 2016

Moving on now to the 2016 presidential election primary race, *The Fix* has a [series](#) of charts showing the least and most factual candidates. On the Democrats' side the least factual has been former Virginia Senator Jim Webb, and on the GOP's, Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina.

New York billionaire, and GOP frontrunner, was again in the news this week:

- Trump has said that the media are underestimating both his crowds and him ([Post Politics](#))

- Trump may also be cherry-picking his polls, but his decline is also clear, with recent polling putting him around 21 percent, down from over 30 percent in early September ([The Fix](#)).
- Trump's drop in the polls could well be related to Republicans not liking him as much as they used to ([FiveThirtyEight](#)).
- Despite promises to the contrary, Trump's tax plan, announced Monday does not 'soak the rich' ([Wonkblog](#)) ...
- ...and, if elected, he'll also send all Syrian refugees that come to the US back where they came from ([Crooks & Liars](#)).
- Is there any precedent in history for Donald Trump? ([Townhall](#))
- If Trump were to win, what would we learn? Mostly that campaigns do matter ([Mischiefs of Faction](#)).

Turning now to the rest of the GOP's presidential primary field:

- After the exit of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker from the primary race last week, [Political Animal wonders](#) if Kentucky Senator Rand Paul will be the next one out, especially since one of his SuperPACs has stopped raising money for him...
- ...though Paul himself has insisted that he's in it for the long haul ([Daily Kos](#)).



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

- Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush explained this week that his new tax plan would benefit the wealthiest 1 percent more than the middle classes ([Crooks & Liars](#)).
- Jeb Bush is apparently the least liked candidate among his own party ([The Fix](#))...
- ...and has also been given 'marching orders' to get his favorables up from donors who are losing money ([Americablog](#)).
- Bush also has 23 endorsements from members of Congress – but given that they're from the left of the GOP, they're apparently not the ones he really wants ([FiveThirtyEight](#)).
- Some even have Bush's campaign on a 'death watch' ([RedState](#)).
- Former Hewlett Packard executive, Carly Fiorina is unlikely to close the electoral gender gap, regardless of how much Republicans want her to ([Monkey Cage](#)).
- Fiorina is also apparently a fan of using government-sponsored torture to keep the country safe ([PoliticusUSA](#)).
- Ben Carson's opposition to a Muslim president is 'curious' ([The Fix](#))...
- ... and Carson has also managed to raise \$20 million in the third fundraising quarter which ended this week ([Outside the Beltway](#)).

Moving on to the Democrats' 2016 contenders:

- House Minority Leader, Nancy Pelosi of California, has called for more Democratic debates ( [Crooks & Liars](#)).
- Vermont Senator, Bernie Sanders, has been ‘surging’, and has cut into the lead of the former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton ( [PoliticusUSA](#)).
- Sanders is also the first candidate to reach a million donations this year, according to his campaign ( [Post Politics](#)).
- Hillary Clinton still has an authenticity problem – and it’s hurting her in the polls ( [FiveThirtyEight](#)).
- It gets worse – 1 in 6 Democrats can’t see themselves supporting Clinton ( [The Fix](#)).
- Clinton has also spent about 90 percent of the money she raised over the summer ( [Post Politics](#)).
- Vice-President Joe Biden remains out of the presidential race for the time being – he’s going to skip the Democrats’ first debate on October 13th ( [Outside the Beltway](#)).

## Government, the Beltway and Congress’ agenda



The most important news to come out of Congress this week is that it managed to keep the government open, and avoid a potential shutdown on October 1<sup>st</sup>. *The Atlantic* [writes](#) that the Senate passed a continuing resolution 78-20 on Wednesday, with the House signing off on the bill with a 277 to 151 vote. They say that the drama over the shutdown essentially ended with House Speaker John Boehner’s announcement that he would be resigning at the end of October last Friday. *White House Dossier* [writes](#) Friday that President Obama has stated he will not sign another temporary budget measure when the current one expires on December 11<sup>th</sup>, potentially setting up another post-Boehner shutdown fight in ten weeks’ time.

Even though a government shutdown has been averted, *Wonkblog* has the [news](#) on Thursday that the US Treasury will reach its debt limit by November 5<sup>th</sup>, much earlier than had previously been expected. They say that this puts new pressure on Congress – and on Speaker Boehner – to pass legislation to once again raise the debt ceiling.

Speaking of Boehner, *Monkey Cage* [says](#) on Wednesday that the manner of his resignation – from both the House and the Speakership – has not happened in a century, and no-one really knows what will come next.

The current House Majority Leader, Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) is widely tipped to replace Boehner when he retires. *The Fix* [warns](#) McCarthy that he is very likely to fail in the job, just as Boehner did, as he will find himself caught between the establishment and Tea Party wings of the GOP.

McCarthy found himself in the news for other reasons this week. On Wednesday, *The Atlantic* [reports](#) that in an interview with Fox’s Sean Hannity, he stated that the House Benghazi special committee was focused on Hillary Clinton, and has led to a fall in her poll numbers. The comments go against the GOP’s contention that the Benghazi committee is objective and disinterested, and not a ‘political stunt’ against Clinton.

This week, *Daily Kos* [writes](#) on GOP Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers, who this week decided against running for House Majority Leader. They say that Rodgers has encountered the Republican Party's 'glass ceiling', which is likely to see the top three posts held by white men.

### Foreign policy, defense and trade

One of Donald Trump's campaign pledges has been that, if elected president, he would deport all 11.4 million undocumented immigrants that are now living in the US. *Monkey Cage* [says](#) that deporting this number of people would not only have serious economic and humanitarian repercussions, it would also lead to a smaller economy in the long-term, with an attendant decrease in military spending.

On Thursday, *Townhall* [argues](#) that the recent deal with Iran over that country's nuclear program means that war is now inevitable. They write that appeasing Iran will only invite aggression from the 'ruthless theocrats' who run the country.

*The Daily Signal* has [four highlights](#) from what they say is 'Obama's ridiculous cyber agreement with China' announced by the White House last week. For them, President Obama has made a paper agreement which will do little to change the behavior of 'bad actors', and has deprived the US of an opportunity to change China's behavior through applying sanctions in the face of their blatant cyber actions.



Two U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle aircraft fly over northern Iraq Sept. 23, 2014, after conducting airstrikes in Syria. (DoD photo by Senior Airman Matthew Bruch, U.S. Air Force/Released)

On to US involvement in the ongoing conflict in Syria, *American Thinker* [says](#) that Obama must join with Russian President, Vladimir Putin in defeating ISIS in that region. *RedState* [writes](#) that Russia's recent power play in Syria (which they say is the guise of targeting ISIS) is a consequence of Obama's 'disastrous' foreign policy which lacks any real strategy against ISIS. *Outside the Beltway*, on the other hand, [writes](#) that neither the US nor Russia have a coherent policy in Syria, after Russia began bombing Syrian opposition fighters this week, something which may lead to an inadvertent confrontation with US Bombing ISIS.

### Obamacare and health policy

On Wednesday, *FiveThirtyEight* [reports](#) that despite the success of the Affordable Care Act, 33 million Americans still do not have health insurance. They write that new data shows that the uninsured are disproportionately poor, black, and Hispanic. *United Liberty*, meanwhile [wonders](#) if Obamacare is becoming a 'blue-state money laundering scheme', with Democratic states cashing in on the failure of their state-run exchanges by not reimbursing the federal government with money provided for the exchanges.

*The Lonely Conservative* [writes](#) this week on Donald Trump's proposals for replacing the Obamacare, which they say is a plan to replace one big government program with another – which they dub 'Trumpcare'.

### The economy and society

Donald Trump's campaign slogan has been to 'Make America Great Again'. On Wednesday this week, *The*

*Atlantic* [writes](#) that the nostalgia that Trump is tapping refers to the period after the end of World War II, up to about 1980 – a time that they remind us was one characterised by high taxes, big government, and strong unions.

*Townhall* [says](#) that Americans are voting with their feet and leaving states controlled by Democrats in favor of GOP run Red States such as North Dakota, Nevada, South Carolina, and Florida.

*The Hill's Congress blog* [comments](#) that the Department of the Interior's plan to manage the 11-state habitat of the sage grouse will have a severe impact on private land use and on energy development across the Western US.

Do you use your local library? According to a new poll, 2/3 of Americans think that the closure of their library wouldn't impact them or their families, [reports](#) *The Daily Signal*.



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On Wednesday, *The Atlantic* [examines](#) how the belief of many Americans that they have an unfettered right to carry weapons in public originates in the pre-Civil War South, which had a culture of violence and honor. Gun rights were once again in the spotlight this week following another tragic mass shooting at a community college in Oregon on Thursday. *Wonkblog* [says](#) that the shooting is number 294 for 2015 – a year which had only 274 days by that point. *Rule 22*, meanwhile [argues](#) why gun control remains unlikely in the current Congress.

### **And finally...**

*The Fix* take a [look](#) at Donald Trump's curious retweeting habits.

Want to know how tall Jeb Bush is? *Post Politics* has the [answer](#).

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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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