

Women need better representation in Vermont, Florida senate to ditch Confederate flag, and is Governor Branstad 'King of Iowa'? : US state blog round up for 3 – 9 October

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

Northeast

On Monday this week, *NH Labor News* [reports](#) that Granite State Governor, Maggie Hassan has announced that she will be challenging US Senator Kelly Ayotte for her seat in 2016.

Moving on to Vermont, *VTDigger* [comments](#) that according to a recent index, the Green Mountain State is 41st in the country in terms of the representation of women at the local, state and national level. They say that Vermont is only one of three states (along with Delaware and Mississippi) which have never elected a woman to Congress.

In Rhode Island this week, *RI Future* [writes](#) that according to the recently released Opportunity Index, the Ocean State trails every other east of Ohio in terms of economic opportunity.

In New York, *State of Politics* [says](#) that while Governor Andrew Cuomo has been focusing on important national and international issues in recent weeks, such as gun control and climate change, his real interest is in his ongoing disagreement with New York City Mayor, Bill de Blasio, over the funding of the city's Metropolitan Transportation Authority next four-year capital plan.

On Tuesday, in the wake of the exit of Anthony Cappola's exit from a legislative district race due to inflammatory comments in his self-published book, *Save Jersey* has a [roundup](#) of ten times when stray remarks have sunk the campaigns of other New Jersey candidates.

PoliticsPA [reports](#) that in the Keystone State this week, the State House has rejected Governor Tom Wolf's tax plans, meaning that the current budget stalemate will continue. State Republicans slammed Wolf's proposals, calling them the 'largest tax hike in the nation'.

South

On Saturday, *Blue Virginia* [implores](#) the state's former Attorney General, Ken Cuccinelli to run again for the state's Governorship as he did in 2013, as he would be easier for a Democratic nominee to beat than the GOP's other announced candidate, former White House adviser, Ed Gillespie.



Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf. Credit: Governor Tom Wolf (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

Kentucky's *Page One* [writes](#) that the Bluegrass State's next governor will inherit \$30 billion public pension debts from the outgoing Governor, Steve Beshear, something that they are likely to ignore.

Heading over to North Carolina, *The Progressive Pulse* [says](#) that a bill currently on the desk of Governor Pat McCrory to sign could make future flooding worse by prohibiting the state's Department of Environmental Quality

from requiring mitigation for impacts to seasonal streams from development.



Credit: Paul Hamilton (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

In the Sunshine State this week, the *Shark Tank* has the [news](#) that a Florida state Senate committee has unanimously recommended to remove the Confederate flag from the Senate's official seal. They accuse of Florida state Senate Democrats of being on a 'witch hunt' to remove the Confederate Flag's history.

Over in Mississippi this week, *Y'all Politics* [reports](#) that Governor Phil Bryant has stated that he will not debate his Democratic rival in the gubernatorial race ahead of the general election on November 3rd. The move makes him the state's first governor in two decades to not debate a challenger while seeking a second term.

On Thursday, *Big Jolly Politics* of Texas has some [lessons](#) for the US House of Representatives, which is currently in turmoil over the Speakership. They say the US House could learn from Joe Straus who was elected as Speaker in the Texas House of Representatives with bipartisan support.

Midwest

Michigan's *Eclecta Blog* [writes](#) this week that state Democrats have called for action from state House Republicans on a package of bills which they latter have been sitting on since March which would combat domestic violence, by giving survivors the tools they need to escape violent situations and seek justice.

Moving over to Illinois, *Capitol Fax* [says](#) that according to a new study, four of the ten worst cities (by several economic and social measures) for African-Americans are in the state.

The Political Environment [comments](#) on Wednesday that Wisconsin's conservatives are not very good at conserving things, citing projects such as Governor Scott Walker's desire to borrow another \$350 million to pay for road projects which have no financing plan.

Is Governor Terry Branstad the 'King of Iowa'? *Blog for Iowa* [reckons](#) that he might be given his recent push for a business tax cut. They also write that other actions by Branstad, such as shutting juvenile homes, mental health hospitals, and his other goal of shutting down public sector unions shows how much he want to ignore the state's legislature and to go it alone.

Heading north to Minnesota, *True North* [says](#) that high school graduation rates in Minneapolis are the lowest among 50 American cities, something that they argue could be improved if more Minneapolis students had greater opportunities to attend private (including religious schools).

North Dakota's *The Prairie Blog* [looks](#) at how the state's US Attorney, Tim Purdon, along with the Environmental Protection Agency were able to bring felony charges against an individual for industrial dumping after state officials failed to charge anyone for the crime.

West and Pacific

Montana's *Reptile Dysfunction* [writes](#) this week that the city council of Missoula is desperate to do something to address gun violence, something which may end up killing the city's annual gun show – the oldest and largest in the state.



Supermax prison in Florence, Colorado By Federal Bureau of Prisons [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Heading down to Colorado, *Peak Politics* [says](#) that not only does President Obama want to shut down the Guantanamo Bay prison, but he would also like to send many of its terrorist prisoners to a Supermax prison in the state. The facility also already holds a number of terrorists, including the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, and Ramzi Yousef of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

On Tuesday, *Eye on Boise* [writes](#) that the state Legislature's Tax Working Group has been advised by Idaho state Commerce Director, Jeff Sayer, that the state should not lower taxes, and should instead invest in developing a talented workforce, as that is what is driving business decisions for expansion.

Thus week *BlueOregon* turns its eye to the state's upcoming Democratic gubernatorial and senatorial primaries. They [argue](#) that the Beaver State needs its own version of Bernie Sanders – one of the Democrats' presidential primary candidates from Vermont – as they would keep the incumbents, Kate Brown and Ron Wyden, from taking Democratic voters for granted.

Fox & Hounds [comments](#) this week that despite having two women US Senators, there is a problem attracting women to run for public office in California. They say that only two of the Golden State's 12 largest cities have women as mayors, and that there has been a decline in the number of women serving in the state legislature.

On Wednesday, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [says](#) that the state has forced four county liquor commissions to define 'dancing', if they wish to continue to regulate it in bars, restaurants, clubs and hotels. Businesses in the Aloha State currently need to obtain a permit if they are going to allow patrons to dance – without them, they may face fines or the loss of their license.

Featured image: low Governor, Terry Branstad. 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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