

New York's Cuomo won't return Trump's donations, Alabama gets out of the marriage business, and Montana's mental health crisis: US state blog roundup for 12 – 18 March

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

Northeast

In the Green Mountain state, *VTDigger* has the [news](#) that five months before the primary vote, more than \$2 million has been poured into the state's gubernatorial race, with the four leading candidates reporting six figure hauls.

Moving on to New Hampshire, *Granite Grok* has a [list](#) of 34 Republicans in the state house who have voted with Democrat, including 12 who have done so more often than with their own party.

In New York, *State of Politics* [reports](#) that Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo has no plans to return the donations given to him by Donald Trump and his family over the years, citing them as the 'cost of doing business in New York'.

PolitickerNJ [writes](#) this week that a bill which aims to tackle pay differences between men and women in the workplace is on its way to Governor Chris Christie's desk. They say that the bill would change the current law to strengthen protections against employment discrimination and promote equal pay for women. Staying in the Garden State, *Save Jersey* has the [news](#) that state Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt (D) has introduced a bill which would fine pedestrians \$50 for crossing the street at a crossing while using a smartphone.

Heading on to the Keystone State, *PoliticsPA* [reports](#) that Governor Tom Wolf has promised to veto the latest \$30 billion budget proposal from the state's GOP. They say that the budget proposal is \$800 million less than the agreement made last year, and contains no tax increases for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

South

On Tuesday, Kentucky's *Blue in the Bluegrass* [says](#) that oddly – given that the state has one of the most restrictive voting regimes in the country – the state has now introduced online voter registration. They comment that bringing in voting by mail may help to turn the state Democratic once again. Staying in Kentucky, *Page One* [comments](#) that outrage over Governor Matt Bevin's budget – and the cuts that it contains – is still spreading, this time to Morehead State University employees who are facing a five-day layoff without pay.



South Carolina Governor, Nikki Haley Credit: South Carolina Governor Nikki R. Haley

Moving over to South Carolina, *FITSNews* [writes](#) that GOP Governor Nikki Haley has still not learned not to attack the critics of the state's embattled agencies like the Department of Juvenile justice which was under fire from a state Representative over an alleged scandal at the Department, because she's usually wrong.

Heading down to the Sunshine State, *SaintPetersblog* [reports](#) that the state's Governor, Rick Scott has signed the state's budget while also issuing \$256 million in line-item spending vetoes. Many of the cuts are for educational and community infrastructure programs.

Yellowhammer has the [news](#) that the Alabama state Senate has passed a bill to get the state out of the marriage business. Senate Bill 143 would remove all requirements to obtain a marriage license in the state. Instead, probate judges would record civil contracts based on signed affidavits.

Moving west to Texas, *Juanita Jean's* [profiles](#) the state's new Agriculture Commissioner – Sid Miller. They say that Miller billed the state for a trip to Oklahoma for treatment where he received some unorthodox medicine, and then paid the state back citing having an 'abundance of caution'.

Midwest

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder this week gave testimony to the US House Government Oversight Committee on the water crisis in Flint. *Eclectablog* [comments](#) that after beginning his opening statement by saying that he was "not going to point fingers", Snyder then proceeded to place the blame for the crisis on the state's Department for Environmental Quality, and on the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Indy Politics [reports](#) that a candidate for the state's Senate has in the past made some controversial remarks on his blog to the effect that Adolf Hitler was a 'great leader'.

On Wednesday, *Progress Illinois* [says](#) that Governor Bruce Rauner has taken a hit in the state's primary elections, with his reportedly preferred candidates being defeated in several key races, despite record spending going into some races from organisations with ties to Rauner. Staying in Illinois, *Capitol Fax* [looks](#) at what they say is the "most amazing story of the year" – a volunteer effort in Cook County Jail which led to a massive fall in incidents, including violence.

Moving on to Missouri, *Show me Progress* [comments](#) on why St. Louis and other rustbelt cities are in decline. They

write that politicians, lawmakers and policymakers over the decades changed laws and enforcement measures to enable predatory corporate behavior which allowed companies to rob the area of its vibrant economy.

West and Pacific

On Friday, *Reptile Dysfunction* [examines](#) that they say is Montana's mental health crisis. They write that a recent shooting murder by a woman of her husband and baby illustrates the state's ongoing mental health crisis which is characterized by a lack of access to treatment and gaps in other critical services.

Heading over to Idaho, *Eye on Boise* [reports](#) that at a hearing of the state's House State Affairs Committee, state Representative, Eric Redman (R) presented an anti-Sharia law bill, and also said that "...Sharia has already overtaken our American courts."



New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez Credit: Steve Terell (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

In New Mexico this week *ProgressnowNM* [says](#) that water and public safety projects have been cancelled as Governor Susana Martinez has vetoed over \$8 million in capital outlays. They comment that only 9 percent of the projects were sponsored by Republican state lawmakers.

Over in Oregon, *Oregon Catalyst* has the [news](#) that despite being in place for less than three weeks, the state's new three-tiered minimum wage law is already costing campus students their jobs, as Oregon's public universities are figuring out how much the increases will cost them.

Moving up to Alaska, *The Mudflats* [argues](#) that the state has the legislature that it deserves, cataloguing a number of poor decisions by lawmakers including an oil development bill which gives more profit to oil companies, and budget cuts despite the building of a "bridge to nowhere".

Over in Hawaii, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [looks](#) at why the Big Island – Oahu – is so unhealthy.

Featured image: Governor of New York State, Andrew Cuomo Credit: Diana Robinson (Flickr, CC-BY-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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