

# Romney takes on Trump after Super Tuesday, Sanders' supporters go after Warren, and job growth continues: US national blog roundup for 27 February – 4 March

*USAPP Managing Editor, Chris Gilson looks at the best in political blogging from around the Beltway.*

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## The 2016 Campaign

Welcome back to USAPP's regular round up of commentary from US political blogs from the past week. The big news this week was Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton's Super Tuesday victories, bringing them one step closer to the respective Republican and Democratic presidential nominations. We'll get in to more detail on the Super Tuesday results in a minute, but first, we take a look at commentary on the campaign in general.

On Monday – ahead of Super Tuesday – *FiveThirtyEight* [says](#) that if we want to understand what's 'roiling' the 2016 election, then we should pay Oklahoma a visit, given the populist enthusiasm of many of its voters.



Credit: DonkeyHotey (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

For many, a Trump/Clinton showdown for the general election now seems to be inevitable. *Political Animal* gives some [early thoughts](#) on how such a race might run, writing that Clinton will be more than happy to go after Trump hard, unlike his GOP primary challengers. *The Atlantic*, meanwhile [looks](#) at how Trump might be able to beat Clinton in the fall, arguing that given his record for changeability, he may well be able morph into a moderate nationalist. On Thursday, *Wonkblog* [says](#) that the differences between the two parties on tax policy leading into the general election are the greatest in more than 35 years.

## The South Carolina Primary and Super Tuesday

Saturday night saw the Democratic primary in South Carolina – *The Fix* [reports](#) that Hillary Clinton was the winner on the night, her second straight victory over Bernie Sanders. They comment that while Clinton's win was not unexpected, it remains to be seen if she will be able to wrap up the nomination in relatively short order.

In the lead up to Super Tuesday this week, *Post Politics* [explains](#) why Donald Trump has an advantage in the states being contested. They say that the large geographical spread of the primaries across 12 states mean that Trump's national media coverage has been a real advantage, and that the Super PACs of the other candidates just do not have a media reach via advertising to match that.

On Tuesday morning, *The Fix* [looks](#) at the complex math behind the Super Tuesday delegate race, writing that it is actually a combination of a dozen races with a dozen set of rules, and a dozen set of exceptions. While all the states assign delegates proportionally, different states have different thresholds to reach different numbers of delegates.

As the Super Tuesday results began to come in, *Hit & Run* [writes](#) that Trump's projected early wins in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and Massachusetts demonstrate his broad national appeal, an appeal that covers more moderate liberal states and those that are more staunchly conservative and religious. Writing on the variety of states Donald Trump was able to take on Tuesday, *The Fix* [says](#) no GOP nominee has ever won all of the different states that Trump did, mostly because of the longstanding split between Northeastern Republicans and Southern ones.



Credit: Michael Bentley (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

*The Federalist* has [seven quick takeaways](#) from the Super Tuesday primary results, including that Trump underperformed, Clinton had a big night, and that in their victory speeches, the two front-runners pivoted their rhetoric towards the general election. *Red State* [agrees](#) that Trump underperformed on Super Tuesday, given that the betting odds on his performance was to win nearly 10 states; he won seven in reality. They also reckon that Texas Senator Ted Cruz over performed, winning Oklahoma, Alaska, and his home state.

Many Senate Republicans are worried about what a Trump candidacy might do to their re-election chances. *The Fix* [says](#) that this week's results had a silver lining for them – results from the Republican Alabama Senate primary show that many Trump supporters can tell the difference between all Washington incumbents and their own.

While it's not a state, and has no votes in the Electoral College, the US territory of Puerto Rico had its own 'Super Sunday' this week, something that *The Atlantic* [writes](#) meant that it was 'primed' to make its own statement about the presidential race.

## The Democratic Campaign and the Candidates

On Saturday, *Political Animal* [writes](#) that for sake of democracy, the Democratic Party should end the system of superdelegates and caucuses, the former which are actually designed to help override the wishes of grassroots activists.

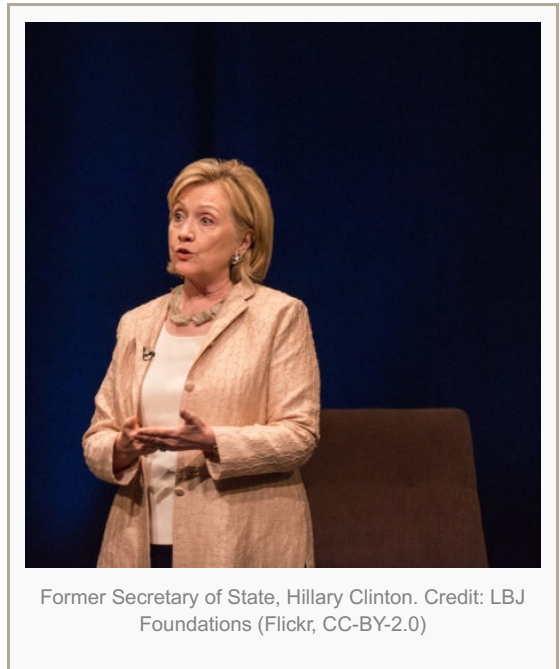
Monday sees *Powerline* [wonder](#) if Democrats should be 'terrified' by Donald Trump, given that Hillary Clinton's lead over him in the national polls is relatively small, and the popularity of Trump's positions. They conclude that while Trump has a 'realistic shot' at defeating Clinton, the Democrats should not be scared of him.

One of the seeming greatest impediments to Bernie Sanders gaining the Democratic nomination is his lack of support among black voters. *The Fix* [says](#) that black voters may not 'feel the Bern' because white Democrats have moved left, while the former group has stayed or become more moderate. *Occasional Planet* meanwhile [comments](#) that the Sanders vs. Clinton contest is all about the swing states, with both candidates likely to concentrate on those states which could go to either party in November. Moving on to the Democratic candidates themselves:

### Hillary Clinton

- Hillary Clinton's massive win among black voters shows how essential winning each element of the 'Obama coalition' is for a Democrat to be successful ([The Fix](#)).
- Clinton this week revealed her plans for a health care public option, plans which do not require additional legislation ([The Lonely Conservative](#)).
- At the moment, all eyes are on Donald Trump, but Clinton is on her way to winning the Democratic nomination ([FiveThirtyEight](#))...

- ...something her decisive Super Tuesday wins definitely helped her with ([Outside the Beltway](#))
- The *New York Times* recently portrayed Clinton as an ‘unrepentant warmonger’, and *Hit & Run* agrees with their characterization.
- The past month was Clinton’s best for fundraising from small donors, which brought in more than \$15 million ([PoliticusUSA](#))
- As she heads towards the Democratic nomination, Clinton continues to be dogged by email issues, including an ongoing FBI investigation into whether she used her private email server to send classified information whilst secretary of state ([Outside the Beltway](#)).
- That said, Democratic voters simply don’t seem to care about Clinton’s email issue ([The Fix](#)).



### Bernie Sanders

- One of Sanders’ main policies is for a single-payer healthcare system. Are its critics understating the benefits of the plans while overstating the likely costs? ([The American Prospect](#)).
- Sanders is not a socialist – and America is not capitalist ([The Atlantic](#)).
- Sanders can run for as long as he likes – but given Clinton’s delegate lead, the chances that he will win the nomination are getting smaller and smaller ([The Fix](#)).
- Sanders had a very good night on Tuesday ([Red State](#))...
- ... but it didn’t change the fact that he has a very tough road ahead for the nomination ([The Atlantic](#)).
- Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren has copped a great deal of flak for not supporting Sanders, with many saying that it’s her fault that Clinton won out in her state ([PoliticusUSA](#)).

### The Republican Campaign and the Candidates

On Saturday, *Red State* writes that if Trump is able to win the GOP nomination, then the party better hope for a Third Party run to hurt his chances by splitting the vote, as even the ‘slow decline’ of America under Clinton would be preferable to a Trump presidency.



*Townhall* reckons that while Trump may be building a bigger Republican Party, much of it may not include a significant share of current Republicans. *Daily Kos*, meanwhile argues that Trump is the candidate that the Republicans deserve, given that for decades the party’s establishment has courted racism, bigotry and misogyny. *The American Thinker* says that the Republican Party is already dead, given the likelihood that party leaders and its establishment will actually campaign against the party’s chosen nominee. After Trump’s victory in Virginia on Super Tuesday, *PoliticusUSA* agrees that the GOP is dead given the lack of a way forward for now-establishment favorite Florida Senator Marco Rubio. *Outside the Beltway* similarly asks if this is the end of the Republican Party as we know it.



*Informed Comment* [warns](#) us that while Senator Lindsay Graham (SC) has been posing as the anti-Trump voice of reason lately, he's still just as crazy as Trump – and so is the GOP establishment.

*Outside the Beltway* [writes](#) Tuesday that the GOP's delegate allocation rules are helping Trump; with Super Tuesday states allocating delegates proportionally, the nomination process was designed to wrap up the process quickly with the aim of not repeating 2012's messy nomination fight. *Red State*, on the other hand, [argues](#) that the post-Super Tuesday delegate count means that nothing is over yet (*The Fix* [disagrees](#)). Many are now concerned that there will be a contested convention; we shouldn't be [says](#) *Talking Points Memo*, given how deeply embedded the presidential selection process is, and the unlikelihood of someone entering the convention in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place and winning the nomination.



Credit: amy (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-2.0)

How can the GOP establishment beat Trump? *The Atlantic* [says](#) that party leaders now favor a strategy of fragmentation. Rather than uniting behind one challenger such as Ted Cruz, the plan is to splinter the vote enough to deny him the 1,237 delegates he needs going into the convention in July. On Wednesday, *FiveThirtyEight* [wonders](#) if the GOP establishment will be able to steal the nomination from Trump, writing that if Trump is unable to get less than 34 percent of the vote as the primary seasons continues, then the party might be able to try to deny him the nomination. *Vox's Mischief of Faction* [reckons](#) that Republicans don't respect their own nomination process, given that the party's voters seem to be supporting Trump for the nomination. *The Fix* [has](#) the interesting statistic on Wednesday that so far, 1 million more people have voted in the GOP primaries than the Democratic ones.

Thursday saw 2012 GOP presidential candidate, Mitt Romney give a speech accusing Trump of being a phony and a fraud. *America Blog* [says](#) that in the Mitt vs. Trump battle, Trump has won, by responding that Romney had 'begged' for his endorsement in 2012. *Hit & Run* [argues](#) that Romney is 'totally wrong' about Trump – he's not a fraud, but a 'distillation of conservative Republican politics for all of the 21st century'.

*PoliticoUSA* [says](#) this week that South Carolina Governor, Nikki Haley threw the GOP into 'chaos' as she claimed that there was nothing stopping Trump from releasing his tax returns, a comment which prompted the New York billionaire to claim that her state's constituents were embarrassed by her.

Much of the concern from within the GOP over Trump extends past the presidential race, many are concerned about Trump's likely effects on down-ballot races. *Daily Kos* [reports](#) that this includes Senator John Cornyn (TX) who instead wants someone who would unify the party. *Sabato's Crystal Ball* [takes a close look at this issue](#), writing that a Trump nomination changes the Senate map from their prediction of the GOP holding the body with 50 seats to the Democrats retaking it with 51.

*American Thinker* [says](#) this week that while the GOP seems to have forgotten the votes of the white working class, Trump certainly has not, as that is where a great deal of his support seems to be coming from.

*The Brennan Centre for Justice* [provides](#) a post-mortem of former Florida Governor, Jeb Bush's candidacy, and takes an in-depth look at his (likely now disappointed) corporate investors into his Right to Rise Super PAC.

While many liberals are often quick to paint Republicans as cold-hearted and uncaring about the less fortunate, *Wonkblog* [reminds](#) us that most Republicans actually care deeply about the poor.

Turning now to the Republicans' frontrunner...

## Donald Trump

- Trump has already essentially won the nomination – now he's pivoting towards the center in order to appeal to many Democrats and independents ([Political Animal](#))
- Since New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's endorsement of Trump he's had further endorsements including Maine Governor Paul LePage, former Arizona Governor Jan Brewer ... ([Outside the Beltway](#))
- ... and Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama ([Post Politics](#)).
- What does Donald Trump really believe? ([American Thinker](#))
- Trump this week tweeted a quote from Italian fascist leader, Benito Mussolini ([Crooks & Liars](#)).
- Perhaps in the same spirit, Trump seems none too keen on the freedom of the press ([PoliticusUSA](#))
- Trump is an enemy of the constitution ([Hit & Run](#))



Donald Trump Credit: Darron Birgenheier (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

- This week there was a scuffle between the Secret Service and a photographer at a Trump rally ([The Fix](#)).
- It's not a mystery why Trump is winning evangelicals – their attachment to evangelicalism is cultural and social, and has little role in their daily lives ([Red State](#)).
- How Trump is laughing at the media ([The Fix](#)).
- That said, we shouldn't assume that conservatives will rally behind Trump ([FiveThirtyEight](#))
- The conservative case for supporting Trump is actually very, very thin ([The Atlantic](#)).
- Could Donald Trump be a Democratic Party agent? ([Powerline](#))...
- ... and how much of his agenda is negotiable? ([Post Politics](#))
- Will Trump run America like Trump University? ([The Federalist](#))...
- ... and what would a Trump presidency actually be like? ([Monkey Cage](#)).

- Attacks from Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz on Trump have done nothing to hurt him according to new polling ([Outside the Beltway](#))
- How Trump is succeeding where Occupy Wall Street failed ([Townhall](#))...
- ...the more he shows the ways that the system is stacked against regular people, the more they hate the elites that are trying to stop him ([The Atlantic](#)).
- Donald Trump has a very bizarre relationship with Planned Parenthood ([Wonkblog](#))
- Super Tuesday's results prove that Trump can be beaten ([The Federalist](#)).
- How Trump is on track to win the nomination – though just barely ([FiveThirtyEight](#)).
- Forty-seven things which have made Donald Trump 'sad' since the beginning of his campaign ([The Fix](#)).

## Ted Cruz

- The millennial case for Ted Cruz ([Townhall](#))
- While Trump uses lawsuits to threaten people, the Texas Senator fought for fairness while he was a constitutional lawyer ([The Federalist](#))
- Speaking of legal challenges – the lawsuit challenging Cruz's eligibility for the presidency was thrown out this week ([Post Politics](#))
- Cruz won a few states on Super Tuesday – but he needed to do much better ([The Fix](#))
- His victory in Texas, was actually the weakest home state Republican primary win in the party's history ([Smart Politics](#))
- How Cruz could still win the nomination ([Red State](#))



## Marco Rubio

- The Florida Senator won't come clean on whether or not he will support Trump if he wins the nomination ([Crooks & Liars](#))
- Why liberals should vote for Rubio – he's the one person who has the chance of beating Trump ([The Atlantic](#))
- Can Rubio save the GOP by dropping out of the race? ([Daily Kos](#))
- Rubio stopped joking around this week, turning serious once again in his attacks on Trump ([Post Politics](#))
- Rubio's Super Tuesday was pretty terrible ([The Fix](#))...
- ... which may have helped lead to Fox News dropping him as their favorite candidate ([Red State](#)).
- Rubio may already losing in Florida ([The Fix](#)).

## John Kasich

- The Ohio Governor this week stated that he would drop out of the GOP primary if he loses his home state ([Red State](#)).
- Is Kasich the Republican establishment's scapegoat? ([The Fix](#))

- The logic behind a Kasich nomination is deeply flawed ([Red State](#))...
- ... though some think that only a Kasich nomination will be able to save the GOP ([The Hill's Congress blog](#))
- At the GOP debate on Thursday night, Kasich missed out on a big chance to make a mark by stating that he would not support Trump if he won the nomination ([The Atlantic](#))

## Ben Carson



Dr. Ben Carson Credit: Gage Skidmore (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

- This week saw the retired neurosurgeon announce that his presidential campaign had 'no path forward' ([Hit & Run](#))...
- ... which was his way of dropping out in the most confusing way possible ([PoliticusUSA](#))
- The highs and lows of Carson's presidential campaign ([The Fix](#))
- The GOP establishment got to Carson ([Caffeinated Politics](#))
- Republicans liked Carson all the way to the end – just not enough to vote for him ([FiveThirtyEight](#)).

## The Republican Party's 11th debate

Thursday night saw the remaining GOP candidates meet in Flint, Michigan for the party's 11<sup>th</sup> debate:

- The raucous debate did little to alter the GOP's appearance as a party on the verge of collapse ([The Atlantic](#)).
- The debate was the worst ever – an embarrassment to the country ([Daily Kos](#)).
- Cruz was the main winner of the debate, with Trump the loser, despite dominating in terms of speaking time ([The Fix](#)).
- Or was Sigmund Freud the winner of the debate? ([America blog](#))
- Cruz and Rubio didn't attack each other during the debate – are we seeing the beginning of a unity ticket between the two of them? ([Red State](#)).

## The Obama Administration

President Obama is due to visit Cuba later this year. *The Federalist* [reckons](#) that the visit has the aim of knocking America down a peg, and that no benefits accrue from Obama's Cuba policy.



Obama has nearly 11 months left in office, but Congress has already passed a bill which would require him to establish transition councils six months prior to the election in November, [says The Atlantic](#).

## The Beltway and the Supreme Court

On Monday, *FreakOutNation* has the [news](#) that Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas has asked his first question on the Court in a decade. The case revolves around Second Amendment rights, of which Thomas is a staunch supporter. The Supreme Court also heard oral arguments this week in the *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*, case over abortion restrictions. *The American Prospect* [says](#) that the case is a critical moment for reproductive rights.



Credit: Adam Fagen (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0)

Following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia last month, the Supreme Court has a vacancy. *The Hill's Congress* [blog writes](#) that Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) was correct when he said in 2007 that the Senate could refuse to confirm a president's nominee, despite the Democrats' frustration that Senate Republicans are not likely to consider any replacement while President Obama is still in office.

Moving on to Congress, *The Fix* [looks](#) at the five ways in which Congressional Republicans are trying to deal with Donald Trump, including jumping into his camp.

In the House, Republicans are considering whether or not to break the budget deal which was reached late last year. *Daily Kos* [writes](#) that Speaker Paul Ryan (WI) is trying desperately to prevent a Congressional GOP 'implosion' over the budget. *The Daily Signal* meanwhile [says](#) that House GOP leaders have argued against scrapping the budget deal, despite the skepticism of the House Freedom Caucus.

## Foreign policy, defense and trade

Does the Cold War still matter? *Townhall* has [10 reasons](#) why it does.

On Tuesday, *The American Interest* [discusses](#) whether China and the US will be able to develop a world order that both countries will value and defend.

## Obamacare and health policy

On Saturday, *Daily Kos* [writes](#) on a new report that has found that over the past five years, one out of every four abortion clinics has been closed.

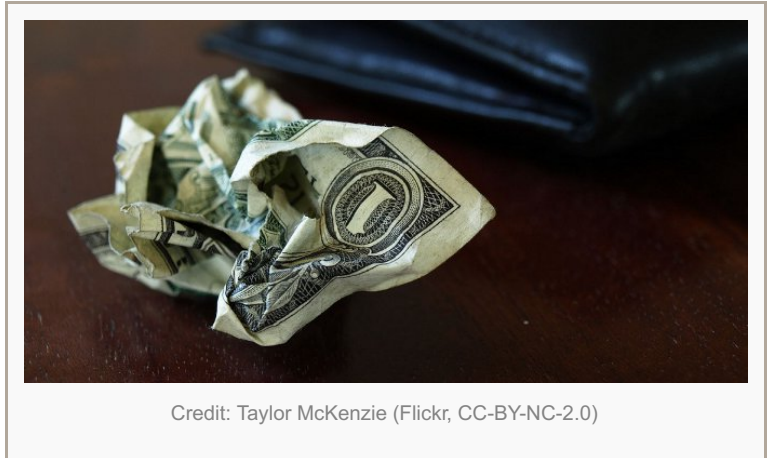
*The Hill's Congress blog* [flags](#) the coming battle over reform of Obamacare's 'Cadillac tax', reform which would see changes to the 40 percent tax rate in the highest cost states. Speaking of Obamacare, Donald Trump is not a big fan, and wants to get rid of it. *Daily Kos* [says](#) that the 20 million people who have health insurance under the scheme might disagree with Trump more than a little bit.

## The economy and society

On Sunday, *The Atlantic* [looks](#) at how the church helps Black men to flourish in America. They explain that it provides structure and instills values which strengthens employment prospects as well as family life.

The American Dream is based around the idea that anyone can pull themselves up and be successful if only they work hard enough. *Daily Kos* [argues](#) that in today's economy, hard work doesn't get people as far because it doesn't pay as well as it used to. Speaking of wages, *Workblog* on Thursday [looks](#) at those jobs where women's wages still haven't caught up, such as real estate, sales, and financial services.

*The Atlantic* [reports](#) that the US economy has now been adding jobs for 72 straight months. *The Daily Signal* [counters](#) this, writing that despite strong job gains, long term unemployment still remains high.



Credit: Taylor McKenzie (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-2.0)

On Monday, *United Liberty* makes the [argument](#) that higher taxes – such as those proposed by both Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton – are a recipe for higher spending, not lower debt levels.

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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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