

Trump's not Nixon (or Reagan), Kasich's pyrrhic Ohio victory, and Obamacare's \$1 trillion Medicare savings: US national blog roundup for 12 – 18 March

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

Jump to

[The 2016 campaign and 'Super Tuesday II](#)
[The Democratic Campaign and the Candidates](#)
[The Republican Campaign and the Candidates](#)
[The Obama Administration](#)

[The Beltway and the Supreme Court](#)
[Foreign policy, defense and trade](#)
[Obamacare and health policy](#)
[The economy and society](#)

The 2016 Campaign and 'Super Tuesday II'

On Sunday this week, *Daily Kos* [writes](#) that both Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders and New York billionaire Donald Trump are 'game changers' in the current presidential election race in that they are presenting themselves as different options for voters outside of those normally presented by what they say are the corporate owned media for the GOP and the corporate wing of the Democratic Party. On similar lines, *Mischiefs of Faction* [looks](#) at what they refer to as the 'reorganization of American parties'. They comment that this year's election shows evidence of Donald Trump capturing voters who used to be Democrats, showing that the major cleavage in politics has been shifting from liberals vs. conservatives to populists vs. cosmopolitans.

With a matchup between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton at the general election looking increasingly likely, many are speculating about turnout. *Daily Kos* this week [writes](#) that millennials are sure to come out and vote in such a contest, despite some commentators suggesting that they might sit out a general election in the absence of Bernie Sanders. Clinton and Trump aside, what about a much-discussed third party candidate? *The Fix* [says](#) this week that exit polls from Tuesday's primary contests (of which more in a minute), show that many Republicans aren't sure if they would back Trump in a general election – at least if a third party candidate was also in play.



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Monkey Cage also takes lessons from this week's primaries, using the fact that the betting markets were correct about the results to speculate about November's general election result. They [say](#) that the prediction markets now show that Trump and Clinton are very likely to be their party's nominees, and that a Democratic nominee has a 72 percent probability of winning. For comparison, Barack Obama had a 60 percent chance of winning according to the betting a markets at the same stage of the 2012 cycle. *Powerline* on the other hand, [reckons](#) that Trump is likely to be the next president, given that they comment that Hillary Clinton is a 'terrible' candidate.

Speaking of Trump, *The Fix* [says](#) that there has been no sign of a 'Trump effect' in this week's congressional primaries, with GOP Senators up for reelection beating those who had hoped to ride Trump's coattails into the general.

This week saw 'Super Tuesday II' or 'Mega Tuesday', with primaries in five states and the Northern Mariana Islands, as well as House and Senate primaries. Ahead of time, *The Fix* [profiles](#) seven congressional primaries that are worth watching including Senator Rob Portman's contest (R-OH). *Outside the Beltway* meanwhile [says](#) that Super Tuesday Part Two is looking very good for Donald Trump who they reckon will win the most important contests outright or win enough to set off a civil war inside the GOP. On Tuesday, *Federal Insider* [looks](#) at who the voters in the five primary states are; Florida's are older compared to the national average, Missouri's and Ohio's are whiter, North Carolina has more black voters, and Illinois closely mirrors national demographics. Despite all this talk, Ohio is really the only state worth paying attention to, [comments](#) *The Fix*.

Following the vote, *Daily Kos* [reports](#) that Clinton has swept through four states, with Missouri too close to call, and Trump winning three, and Texas Senator Ted Cruz taking Missouri, and Governor John Kasich taking his home state of Ohio.

The Democratic Campaign and the Candidates

Bernie Sanders is an unabashed socialist, an attribute which many argue mean that he would have no chance of winning a general election. That said, the rise of a Democratic socialist candidate has made the party think more about its policy proposals. On Tuesday, *Wonkblog* [look](#) at what they say is the Democratic Party's proposal to rival Sanders' socialism – a modest minimum wage increase, higher taxes on the rich and a universal pension which would follow employees from job to job.

Moving on to what the two candidates have been up to this past week:

Hillary Clinton

- Why Clinton's delegate lead over Bernie Sanders is bigger than it looks ([The Fix](#)),

- Is the Clinton campaign using Sanders' rhetoric? ([Informed Comment](#))
- How Clinton's struggles with the death penalty are nothing new ([The Fix](#))
- Clinton's gaffe this week over Nancy Reagan's AIDS activism show why populism is rising ([Political Animal](#))
- White voters were the reason Clinton this week won Ohio but lost Michigan last week ([The Fix](#)).

Bernie Sanders



Credit: Bob Simpson (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0)

- Why Sanders' Democratic socialism is doomed ([American Thinker](#))
- Is Sanders disregarding poor white Americans? ([Townhall](#))
- Despite being 74 years old, Sanders dominates among young voters ([The Fix](#))
- Just what is the 'political revolution' that Sanders keeps talking about – and can he deliver one? ([Informed Comment](#))
- How Sanders is hijacking the Democratic Party to be elected as an independent ([The Fix](#))...
- ... and how he's trying to win over the Democratic establishment ([The Atlantic](#))
- After losing to Clinton in this week's primaries, the Sanders campaign laid out their strategy for those that remain – focusing on larger, later states ([Crooks & Liars](#))...
- ... which means that a path to victory would involve 'unprecedented and absurd' delegate math ([Americablog](#)).
- The Democratic race is over for Sanders, reckons [The Fix](#)
- Though acknowledging that his campaign has a hard fight ahead, Sanders ruled out dropping out of the race ([Post Politics](#))

The Republican Campaign and the Candidates

On Saturday, [The Atlantic](#) writes on conservatives' 'impossible choice' in this election, between the potential for an 'anti-Trump' third party candidate and Trump himself. Given its travails over Trump, many commentators have been talking of the death of the Republican Party; [The Atlantic](#) says that there is a 'civil war' over the party. [Daily Kos](#) argues that contrary to what many in the media are stating, the GOP is not imploding given that it currently holds both the House and the Senate and the vast majority of state legislatures. Implosion or not, [The Fix](#) looks at what they say is the 'almost complete evisceration' of the Republican establishment. [Townhall](#) wonders on Friday whether we are seeing the suicide of the GOP – or its rebirth.

Post Politics [reports](#) that Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio and John Kasich all rebuked Donald Trump for the violence ‘anarchy’ unfolding at his campaign rallies, but also blamed the left and the media. *Red State*, meanwhile, [writes](#) that given that he’s not managed to gain more than 50 percent in a primary so far, Trump is the weakest frontrunner in Republican history. *The Fix* [looks](#) at the likelihood that the GOP nomination fight will come down to California, which does not hold its primary until June 7th.

On Wednesday, *The Fix* has the [news](#) that Donald Trump has singlehandedly shut down this coming Monday’s Fox News debate by refusing to take part.

Looking at more than just the race for the White House, *Ten Miles Square* [says](#) Friday that the GOP may not keep hold of the Senate this cycle given their blocking of President Obama’s Supreme Court nominee.

Turning now to the GOP candidates running for their party’s nomination, and beginning with the one who has the greatest number of delegates so far:

Donald Trump

- Over the weekend a Trump rally in Chicago was postponed as his supporters and detractors got into a scuffle ([Daily Kos](#))...
- ...though by Tuesday Trump was stating that he would not pay the legal fees of those who assault protestors at his rallies ([Crooks & Liars](#))
- Voters don’t seem to hold violence at Trump’s rallies against him ([The Fix](#))
- Why the #NeverTrump movement will lead to a Hillary Clinton presidency ([American Thinker](#)).
- Why aren’t more right-wing groups attacking Trump? ([The Federalist](#))
- Trump’s rhetoric is eerily similar to that used by the KKK in the 1920s ([The Atlantic](#))...
- ...and the New York billionaire also seems to have a lot in common with 1960s segregationist George Wallace ([Americablog](#))...
- ...but not with Richard Nixon ([Caffeinated Politics](#))
- Trump isn’t Ronald Reagan, either ([RedState](#))...
- ... or Mitt Romney ([The Fix](#))
- Is Trump actually Barack Obama’s ‘dark doppelganger’? ([The Atlantic](#))
- Trump is telling resentful Americans that they are right – they are not getting what they deserve ([Monkey Cage](#)).
- Why we shouldn’t stereotype Trump’s supporters ([RedState](#))



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

- Are Trump's supporters the real RINOs? ([American Thinker](#))
- What if Trump had run as a Democrat ([The American Prospect](#))
- GOP donors will still help Trump out of self-interest ([Political Animal](#))
- Who likes Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders more than Trump? Hispanic Republicans ([The Fix](#)).
- Not only does Trump want to 'Make America great again', but also to make government huge again ([The Atlantic](#))
- Even Trump doesn't understand his success ([Hit & Run](#))
- Anti-Trump attack ads are finally appearing, but they may be too late ([FiveThirtyEight](#))
- Seven things Trump supporters are no longer allowed to complain about ([Red State](#))
- Even after 'Super Tuesday II', it's still not clear that Trump will be able to get a majority of delegates ([FiveThirtyEight](#))
- Trump reckons that there would be 'riots' if a contested convention resulted in him not becoming the nominee ([Post Politics](#))
- Will the record primary turnout for Trump carry over to the general election? ([Monkey Cage](#))
- How Trump would get out the vote for the Democrats if he's the nominee ([The Federalist](#))
- Why the challenge of 'Trumpmania' won't end in November ([Political Animal](#))
- What will really happen if Trump is elected? The economy will improve and Obamacare will be history ([American Thinker](#))
- That said, former candidate Ben Carson tried to reassure us this week that a Trump presidency will 'only' last four years ([The Fix](#)).
- Trump's healthcare plan is awful ([Daily Kos](#))
- Speaking of policy – Donald Trump's foreign policy adviser is...Donald Trump ([Crooks & Liars](#))
- Would a president Trump actually keep the US out of war? ([The Federalist](#))

Ted Cruz

- On Thursday the Texas Senator made the dubious claim that he could still win the GOP nomination outright ([The Fix](#))
- If he doesn't he will support Trump as the nominee ([Post Politics](#))

- Ted Cruz’s foreign policy team is a nightmare ([Americablog](#))
- Mitt Romney’s voting for Cruz – and so should you ([RedState](#))

Marco Rubio



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

- Rubio won his third primary contest on Saturday (in Washington DC), breaking his delegate drought ([The Atlantic](#))
- Rubio went from this to his ‘worst week in Washington’, losing his home state of Florida on Tuesday night ([The Fix](#))...
- ...leading to him suspending his campaign in the place it began ([The Atlantic](#))
- How Rubio lost his voice – and the election ([The Federalist](#))
- Rubio went from the saviour of the GOP to an underachiever ([The Fix](#))
- Rubio is only the 3rd Republican in 80 years to win at least one state, but lose his home state primary ([Smart Politics](#))
- What Rubio should do next ([RedState](#))

John Kasich

- How the Ohio Governor’s campaign is still only about him ([RedState](#))
- Kasich is keen for a contested convention in July ([Daily Kos](#))
- Is Kasich actually running as Joe Biden? ([The Federalist](#))
- Kasich’s Ohio win on Saturday was a pyrrhic one ([RedState](#))
- Given that it’s now mathematically impossible for Kasich to win the nomination, why is he still campaigning? ([The Atlantic](#))

The Obama Administration

[The Fix reports](#) that this week President Obama condemned what he described as the ‘vicious atmosphere’ of the 2016 campaign, and called on the country to prove that we are better than the current state of politics.

In the lead up to Obama’s announcement of his nominee for the Supreme Court this week, [American Thinker writes](#) that most of his finalists are actually donors.

The Beltway and the Supreme Court

People really don't like Congressional gridlock. So why not try and fix it by making Congress more representative? *The Federalist* [says](#) this week that if Congress were to be as representative as the Founders' had intended – with each member representing about 50,000 people – then it would have around 6,000 legislators.

This week Michigan Governor Rick Snyder testified before the House Oversight Committee about Flint's water crisis. *The Fix* has the [nine most heated moments](#) from Snyder's hearing, including the GOP going after the Environmental Protection Agency. Still in the House, *The Daily Signal* [reports](#) Wednesday that House conservatives have pushed for steeper cuts to the \$1.07 trillion budget plan approved by the House Budget Committee this week.



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Moving on to the Senate, *The Fix* [comments](#) after President Obama nominated the Chief Justice of the US Court of Appeals, Merrick Garland, that the Senate which confirmed him for his current job 19 years ago looks little like the Senate of today. *The Atlantic* [reckons](#) that Garland is a great pick for the Supreme Court, though this is likely not to matter given that it's unlikely that he will be confirmed. *The Daily Signal* gives a [reason](#) why the GOP-dominated Senate may not be inclined to confirm Garland – he has a history of advocating for gun control.

Foreign policy, defense and trade

On Sunday, *The Atlantic* [writes](#) on what they call President Obama's 'revolution' on foreign policy; that the country's foes have become friends, and friends, foes. *Monkey Cage* this week [examines](#) why even after six years of civil war, the US has not yet intervened in Syria, arguing that the Obama administration's concerns over the potential negative consequences of taking action trump the actual effects of inaction. *The Hill's Congress blog* also [talks](#) US foreign policy, commenting this week that the fear which is driving Donald Trump's success is also tying America's hands in the war on terror, pressuring policymakers not to be soft on what many worry is an existential threat to the US.

On Thursday, *The American Interest* [reports](#) that the Pentagon is 'ramping up' plans to confront China in the South China Sea. Will we ever get military spending under control? *The Left Coaster* [reckons](#) that given the political risks entailed by even proposing spending cuts in this area no, we probably won't.

Obamacare and health policy



On Saturday, *Daily Kos* [looks](#) at Obamacare's latest achievement – saving \$1 trillion from Medicare bills all above what was predicted by the Congressional Budget Office when the law was first enacted. *Wonkblog* also has some [positive](#) Obamacare-related news. They write that in 2016, Obamacare's exchanges increase their number of filled prescriptions by 8.6 percent. Given that spending on prescription drugs is lower per person on Obamacare (compared to commercial plans), this means that a significant and previously unmet need for prescription drugs is being filled.

Moving on to less positive views on Obamacare, *The Daily Signal* notes Wednesday that Obamacare insurers could get '[millions](#)' from a controversial government fund after a lawsuit was filed by a nonprofit insurer claiming for money requested from Obamacare's risk corridor program. *Hit & Run* meanwhile [looks](#) at what they say are Obamacare's 'weak' enrolment numbers, writing that exchange enrolment is about 7 million less than what was originally expected by the Congressional Budget Office. On Friday, *RedState* [comments](#) on the increasing prevalence of Obamacare's 'surprise medical bills', where patients get bills from practitioners who are not covered by their insurance company.

Wonkblog this week [looks](#) at the fight by nurses against doctors to provide more care. They say that they're winning their fight, with 21 states now establishing full practice authority for nurses.

The economy and society

On Friday, *Hit & Run* [says](#) that there is a 'lost generation' of millennial entrepreneurs, after new statistics showed that the percentage of adults under 30 that own a business is the lowest in 30 years.

Fracking, what's it good for? America, it turns out. *The American Interest* [reckons](#) that it's never been more important, with 51 percent of US oil production now coming from fracking.

The debate over free trade has been an important one in this election cycle. *Wonkblog* [says](#) that the anti-trade rhetoric that's coming from both Republicans and Democrats is giving business 'the willies'. Speaking of trade, *The American Interest* [profiles](#) the 'job killing' trade deal between the US and China that it's likely you've never heard of.

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