

# Cruz and Sanders win in Wisconsin, GOP convention scenarios, and is it time to rebalance US trade?: US national blog roundup for 2 – 8 April

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

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## The 2016 Campaign and the Wisconsin primary

On Saturday this week, *The Fix* [profiles](#) the five big political battles happening in the states this year: pre-emption bills aimed at overriding local ordinances, budgets and taxes, gun rights, abortion and LGBT rights. *Sabato's Crystal blog* also [looks](#) beyond the presidential race to this year's Senate and gubernatorial elections. On the Senate side, they change six ratings towards the Democrats, and they say that Indiana's and North Carolina's gubernatorial races have moved to 'Leans Republican' and 'Toss-up' respectively.

Moving on to the presidential race, *Daily Kos* [looks](#) to history, arguing that splintered parties have a habit of losing elections. They say that divisions among both Republicans and Democrats this year (though more so for the GOP) could lead to trouble this fall. Many have also argued that both Texas Senator Ted Cruz on the GOP side and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders on the Democratic are 'unelectable' because of their relatively extreme ideologies compared to the rest of their party. *FiveThirtyEight* [dives](#) into this, finding that both Cruz and Sanders do stand out ideologically – though Cruz more so, being even farther to the right than Barry Goldwater, the GOP's 1964 candidate. *Monkey Cage*, meanwhile [wonders](#) why so many Democrats and Republicans are pretending to be independents, writing that extreme candidates like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders allow people to reject the established parties, without having to actually vote for a third party.

This week also saw Democratic and Republican primary elections in Wisconsin (of which more in a minute). *The Fix* [comments](#) that while the momentum of candidates who win such contests is important, the number of delegates they have still matters more. *Federal Insider* [reminds](#) us on Wednesday that amidst all the mud-slinging and rancour of the campaign, candidates still need to be ready to govern, and all the responsibility and accountability that comes with it.

Some commentators have floated the idea that Donald Trump or someone else could run as a third party candidate. On Wednesday, *The Atlantic* [says](#) that there is still time for a third-party or an independent run, though any such candidate would have to mobilize relatively quickly from now.

## The Wisconsin primary

On Tuesday voters in the Badger State went to the polls to choose their preferred candidate for the Republican and Democratic presidential nomination. *Political Animal* [argues](#) that the primary both matters and doesn't for both sides.

On the Republican side, *Post Politics* [looks](#) at how Donald Trump helped Ted Cruz to build a gender gap in the state by attacking Cruz's wife Heidi, bringing former presidential candidate (and Hewlett Packard executive) Carly Fiorina to her (and Cruz's) defense. *Powerline* [comments](#) on the stakes in Wisconsin, arguing that if Cruz is able to win, then this may raise the hopes of the 'never Trump' movement. *FiveThirtyEight* [writes](#) that the state's media aren't as obsessed with Donald Trump as national outlets and that by leaving the state on March 31 and April 1<sup>st</sup>, he may have lost some momentum amongst local media at a vital time.

For the Democrats, *Outside the Beltway* [says](#) that Clinton and Sanders are 'neck and neck' a day before the primary, but that even if Sanders is able to win, Clinton will still be able to pick up a few delegates.

Sanders did come through for the Democrats (*Daily Kos*), as did Ted Cruz for the GOP (*RedState*). *The Fix* writes that Trump lost Wisconsin to Cruz partially because the Texas Senator was able to consolidate support from people who are no longer in the race, and because Trump did worse than he normally would with Republican voters. *PoliticoUSA* [says](#) that the biggest winner from Wisconsin (aside from Cruz and Sanders) are 'never Trump' Republicans, while *The Fix* [comments](#) that political junkies are among the winners given that an open GOP convention is now much more likely. *Post Politics* [reminds](#) us that the race will now move to the Empire State – which holds its primary on April 19<sup>th</sup> – where Donald Trump dominates.

## The Democratic Campaign and the Candidates

On Sunday, *Townhall* [wonders](#) why the press is not discussing the 'rigged' Democratic presidential nomination. They say the role of superdelegates means that Clinton is farther ahead of Sanders than she should be, given the former's momentum. Most of the discussions around the possibility of a contested convention have centered around the GOP – but is there a chance that the Democrats might have one as well? *RedState* [says](#) that Bernie Sanders' campaign thinks that there might well be, especially if he does well in the upcoming primary states which have a large number of white, liberal voters. Also writing from the right, *Powerline* [comments](#) that the Democratic Party is in 'meltdown', after Wisconsin's former Democratic Lieutenant Governor, Barbara Lawton queried who would pay for Sanders' and Clintons plans for 'free college', and Bill Clinton's confrontation with Black Lives Matters protestors at a campaign rally.


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

### Hillary Clinton

- Sanders won in Wisconsin, but Clinton is still in control of the delegate race ( [Outside the Beltway](#))...
- ...and may be even more so after New York's closed primary next week ( [Caffeinated Politics](#))
- Who says that Clinton didn't accomplish anything in the Senate? ( [Powerline](#))
- It turns out that Clinton was actually a more effective lawmaker in the Senate than Sanders ( [Monkey Cage](#))
- Clinton has foreign policy experience, but that doesn't mean it's good ( [Americablog](#))
- Why Clinton is a weaker frontrunner than Donald Trump ( [The Federalist](#))
- This week Clinton questioned whether Sanders was qualified to be president ( [Post Politics](#))

- How is 2016 Clinton doing compared to 2008 Clinton? Better – especially in the South ([Daily Kos](#))

## Bernie Sanders

- Sanders hasn't released his tax returns, and blames his wife in a roundabout way ([Americablog](#))
  - March saw Sanders outraise Clinton for third consecutive month, raking in \$44 million compared to the former Secretary of State's \$29.5 million ([Post Politics](#))
  - Win or lose, Sanders' campaign has been a 'successful insurgency' ([The Atlantic](#))
  - Young Sanders supporters won't vote for Trump over Clinton ([Crooks & Liars](#))
  - He claims that he wants to break up the banks and address inequality, but how much does Sanders actually know about policy? ([The Atlantic](#))
  - Given that he doesn't have a deep grasp of the issues, Sanders isn't ready to be president ([Americablog](#))
  - Sanders also reckons that Clinton isn't qualified to president ([Crooks & Liars](#))
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Senator Bernie Sanders Credit: Senate Democrats (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)
- Sanders isn't catching up with Clinton in the delegate race. It's in the math. ([The Fix](#))...
  - ...but he has caught up with Clinton in a new national poll ([The Atlantic](#))
  - Why Sanders is even less competitive than he appears ([FiveThirtyEight](#))
  - Is Sanders as big a joke candidate as Trump? ([Crooks & Liars](#))
  - Older Democrats don't like Sanders. Why? ([The Fix](#))
  - Sanders is planning a short break from campaigning to speak at the Vatican ([Post Politics](#))

## The Republican Campaign and the Candidates

[Outside the Beltway](#) looks at the latest 'anti-Trump' strategies, which mostly focus on John Kasich. They say that the Ohio Governor would be a much stronger nominee against Hillary Clinton than Ted Cruz or Donald Trump. [Red State](#) reports that a new poll shows a statistical tie between Trump and Cruz. The [American Prospect](#) says Wednesday that the lesson from the current Republican primary is 'be careful what you wish for', referring to the success of Donald Trump which feeds off the party's historic turn towards electing candidates bent on undermining party leaders. [Political Animal](#) comments that the GOP coalition is now a 'four legged stool', comprised of social conservatives, defense hawks, business and the conservative media, with the latter leg now divided between pro and anti-Trump media outlets, undermining the other three.

On Wednesday, following the Wisconsin primary, [Daily Kos](#) writes that the Republican race will now move from a state by state battle to 'delegate by delegate combat', with battles to be waged in congressional districts and in the state conventions which elect delegates.

Looking ahead, some in the Republican Party are looking at the possibility of nominating an outside at the GOP convention, with Speaker Paul Ryan's (WI) name often being mentioned. [The Federalist](#) is keen on such a 'clean state', as nominating Donald Trump would mean a big loss for the GOP. [The Fix](#) argues that picking Paul Ryan (or anyone else) is risky given that the media's attention would be on them all at once in a crucial time in the campaign.

It's probably something we shouldn't be too concerned with in any case – *FiveThirtyEight* reckons that Ted Cruz would win a contested convention over Ryan. On Thursday *The Atlantic* says that regardless of who has the most delegates going into Cleveland, there is likely to be conflict, and runs through five potential scenarios.

Those commenting on the possibility of an open or contested GOP convention in July are mostly focusing on who might end up being the nominee. On Monday, *Daily Kos* comments on the other convention battle – same-sex marriage. They say that some in the Republican Party are pushing for the convention to adopt language to accommodate same-sex marriage, though social conservatives are now pushing back.

Turning now to the GOP's candidates, and beginning with The Donald:

## Donald Trump

- Trump's poor results in Wisconsin do have a silver lining (*The Fix*)
- Donald Trump leads the polls in New York – which holds its primary next week – but his lead is meaningless (*RedState*)
- California is now the most important remaining state for Trump – and he's just got some bad news; a new poll means that it will be hard to predict how well he'll do for some time (*The Fix*)
- Trump apparently has no campaign infrastructure in the remaining primary states (*RedState*)
- Despite his claims when he loses, nobody's actually stealing the election from Trump (*American Thinker*)
- Trump should just stop complaining and run as a third party candidate (*RedState*)



Speaker Paul Ryan Credit: Gage Skidmore (Creative Commons BY SA)



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

- How the GOP's 'wacky' delegate rules are helping Trump (*FiveThirtyEight*)
- Trump's magic number for the nomination is 61 percent – that's the number of pledged delegates he needs to win from now on (*The Fix*)...
- ...though after the pasting Cruz gave him in Wisconsin, his delegate target seems to be slipping through his fingers (*RedState*)
- Is this because we're now finally seeing what Trump's ceiling looks like? (*The Fix*)
- Trump's afraid of a brokered convention – and with good reason (*United Liberty*)

- Why Trump's nomination could well come down to him bribing 200 people ([Daily Kos](#))
- On Thursday, Trump announced that Paul Manafort would be his convention manager – a change we should all pay attention to ([The Fix](#))
- Trump's theory of the economy is bizarrely optimistic ([Wonkblog](#))...
- ... for example, he'd solve the country's national debt crisis by using his negotiating power ([RedState](#))
- Going by his budget plans, Donald Trump is just House Speaker Paul Ryan 'on steroids' ([Wonkblog](#))...
- ... or is he? ([The Federalist](#))
- How all of Wall Street is betting Trump will lose ([Wonkblog](#))
- Former New York Mayor, Rudy Giuliani gave his tacit endorsement of Trump this week ([The Fix](#))
- Trump might find it even harder to govern after inventing a new government agency this week, the 'Department of Environmental' ([Crooks & Liars](#))
- Trump plans to shift gears in the coming weeks with a series of policy speeches ([Post Politics](#))
- President Obama this week rubbished Trump's plan to make Mexico pay for a border wall, calling it a 'half-baked notion' ([Crooks & Liars](#))
- Mexico could call Trump's bluff on the wall, after he said it could be paid for by taxing the remittances home of Mexicans in the US ([Wonkblog](#))
- Trump's foreign policy is 'farcical' ([Ten Miles Square](#))
- Is Trump just a policy dummy? ([American Thinker](#))
- There have been some murmurings of internal divisions within the Trump campaign ([RedState](#))
- After a bad couple of weeks, is Trump toast? ([Townhall](#))
- Speaking of Trump's bad week, he took five different positions on abortion over three days ([The Fix](#))
- Not only is Trump actually pro-choice, he's also a sociopath ([RedState](#))
- Is the 'Never Trump' movement actually right on time? ([The Fix](#))



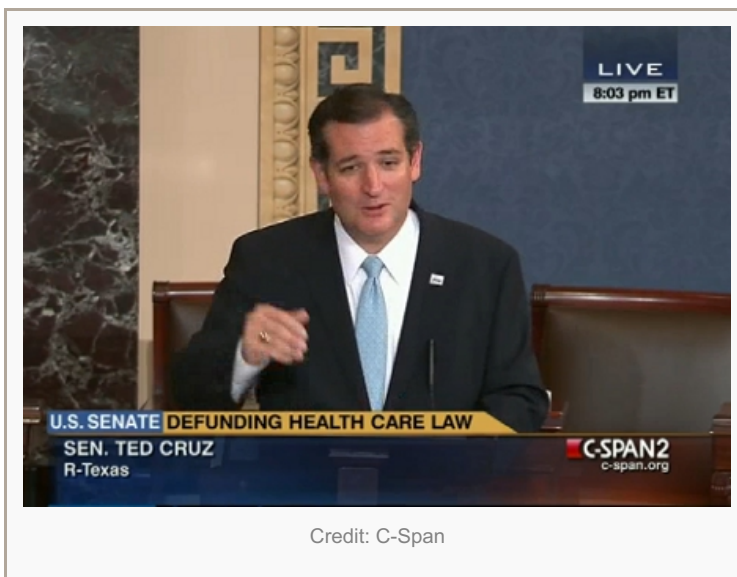
Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin speaks at a rally after endorsing Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa on Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2016. Credit: Alex Hanson (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

- What Trump should have learned from 2008 vice presidential candidate, Sarah Palin ([The Atlantic](#))

- While his campaign has never really been 100 percent self-funded, Trump is now open to general election contributions ([RedState](#))
- Having Trump on the top of the ticket in November could lead to electoral disaster for the GOP ([Outside the Beltway](#))
- Trump apparently has zero delegates from North Dakota ([RedState](#))
- Why talking about losing has made Trump a winner ([Monkey Cage](#))
- The Donald wears a bulletproof vest at his rallies ([FreakOutNation](#))
- Trump's love of non-scientific polls dates back 25 years ([The Fix](#))
- Trump gets five times more TV airtime than Ted Cruz ([RedState](#))
- A new survey shows that 90 percent of Trump's supporters feel that their beliefs and values are under attack ([The Fix](#))
- Why Trump's supporters are voting alone – they're more likely to be civically disengaged ([The Atlantic](#))
- Two maps which show who's voting for Trump – and why ([Monkey Cage](#))
- Despite his sexism, some women actually do support Donald Trump, mostly because they are concerned about how the country appears to them to be changing ([Monkey Cage](#))...
- ... though he is doomed with black voters ([The Atlantic](#))

## Ted Cruz

- The Texas Senator is hitting Trump on the campaign trail – but he's also waging a quieter war on John Kasich ([Post Politics](#))
- How Cruz is acting like a frontrunner ([RedState](#))...
- ....though his campaign got off to a disastrous start in New York as he was jeered while touring The Bronx ([PoliticusUSA](#))
- After being generally hated and despised, Cruz has begun to reach out to the GOP establishment ([The Fix](#))
- Cruz's delegate game shows that he'd be a better president compared to Trump ([RedState](#))
- Why Cruz should worry 2016 Republicans running for Congress as well ([The Fix](#))
- Trump's team reckons that Cruz cheated to win this week's Wisconsin primary ([RedState](#))
- Ted Cruz's relationship with the media is beginning to warm up a bit ([The Fix](#))...
- ... though he's offering no apologies for being the biggest jerk in the Senate ([Daily Kos](#))
- Cruz raised more than \$12.5 million in March – his biggest ever monthly total ([Post Politics](#))



Credit: C-Span

## John Kasich

- Is the Ohio Governor still in the race? ([RedState](#))

- Even if Kasich isn't doing well in the primaries, he's putting a lot of effort into his convention strategies ( [Daily Kos](#))
- Does Kasich actually serve a purpose in New York? ( [RedState](#))

## The Obama Administration

On Sunday, *Crooks & Liars* [says](#) that former Secretary of Defense, Bob Gates has stated that he feels 'double-crossed' by President Obama's defense cuts. He apparently is concerned that US 'fighting efficiency' is being sacrificed in the name of politically correct measures such as regulations which allow women to serve in combat.

Last week saw the states of California and New York introduce measures to increase their state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour. *PoliticusUSA* [reports](#) that President Obama this week commended New York Governor Andrew Cuomo for signing the measure, and reiterated his call on Congress to increase the national minimum wage. Talking about the other side of the aisle, *RedState* has the [news](#) that Obama said this week that both Donald Trump and Ted Cruz are 'scary' on the issue of illegal immigration.

In his recent visits to Cuba and Argentina, President Obama was much more even handed about the roles of capitalism and communism in society than most presidents have been in the past. But does this mean that Obama is a 'closet socialist'? No really, [says](#) *Post Politics*.

## The Beltway and the Supreme Court

When the Federal Reserve Bank's top officials met last month, they decided not to increase interest rates once again after their first rates in six years last December. *Workblog* [says](#) that notes from the March meeting show that the Fed is unsure when rates might rise once again.

On Thursday, *Hit & Run* [looks](#) at federal sentencing reform. They say that if everyone seems to want it, then why has it not happened yet? Reforms have largely been pushed off the table because of disagreements over whether the Senate should vote on a replacement for Supreme Court Justice Scalia who died in February.



Credit: Richard Cawood (Creative Commons BY NC)

*Workblog* also [writes](#) this week that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has been the subject of some controversy of late because of its new rules that aim to curtail the payday lending industry and their high fees. They comment that many in the GOP have vowed to abolish the agency, arguing that it is the epitome of abusive government power.

Going back to the Supreme Court, *Crooks & Liars* [argues](#) that given the current level of obstruction, there won't be a Democratic appointee to the Court until there's a Democratic Senate. *The Atlantic* [looks](#) ahead to what a liberal SCOTUS might be like, writing that in such a court, abortion rights and affirmative action would be secure, and the death penalty might be declared to be unconstitutional. Going back to the Supreme Court as it actually is today, *Monkey Cage* [covers](#) the Court's ruling this week in the *Evenwel v. Abbott* case to uphold the principle of 'one person, one vote'. The case was over whether states could continue their practice of drawing legislative districts based on the entire population, not just on those who are entitled to vote.

## Foreign policy, defense and trade

On Tuesday, *American Thinker* [says](#) that the voters are right – as evidenced by their support for the anti-trade policies of both Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders – it's time to rebalance trade to help American workers by

applying tariffs or import limitations on countries which have trade surpluses.

*The Daily Signal* [argues](#) this week that the US needs a president who will lead in Asia. They comment that whoever is in the White House in 2017 will face security threats in that region, with North Korea's growing military capabilities, and China's rising nationalism. They say that addressing these challenges will need a 'fundamental resurgence' of US military power to offset recent defense budget cuts. On similar lines, *The American Interest* [writes](#) that the recent increase in global defense spending is down to concern about the potential for Russia to increase its sphere of influence and China's regional ambitions. They argue that the US benefits the world by making countries feel safer at lower cost, and that weak leadership now threatens the 70-year



success of America's strategic approach. *The Daily Signal* [says](#) on Tuesday that given the aforementioned increasing belligerence of Russia, NATO still matters, and that if the US were to walk away from their commitment to the alliance, then there would be serious consequences.

Still on US defense issues, *American Thinker* [argues](#) that it's now time to 'get serious' about the F-35 strike fighter. They say that the plane's development program has encountered many problems since it began in 2001, with each plane now costing \$160 million, and that future programs need to have clear consequences when targets aren't met. *Political Violence @ a Glance* also talks defense technology, [discussing](#) how the new film *Eye in the Sky* address the moral dilemmas of US drone warfare.

## Obamacare and health policy

Has Obamacare actually turned out to be a job killer? Not a chance, [says](#) *Daily Kos*.

## The economy and society

On Tuesday in the wake of the leak of the Panama Papers, *Wonkblog* [looks](#) into how the US became one of the world's biggest tax havens. They write that one of the least recognized facts about the global offshore industry is that it is not offshore, with the US being one of the easiest places to set up anonymous shell companies.

The student loan bubble has become of increasing concern to policymakers and politicians alike. But *The Federalist* [asks](#); what about the auto loan bubble? Car loans have apparently grown at the same rate as student loans since the Great Recession, with outstanding loans now valued at over \$1 trillion.

On Saturday, *Daily Kos* [comments](#) on the growing cost of housing; it's making like impossible for low income families, they write. Moving from costs to income, *The American Prospect* [reflects](#) on recent increases in the minimum wage in states like New York and California, and ponders what the 'right' minimum wage might be.

On Monday, *Wonkblog* covers some [new research](#) which shows that white resentment is fueling opposition to gun control, findings which mean that there may be limits to trying to change gun policy by appealing to hard evidence. Also on guns, *The Daily Signal* makes the [argument](#) that more guns do not equal more gun violence, juxtaposing recent increases in gun ownership with falling criminal homicide rates.

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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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Minimum wage protest Credit: Wisconsin Jobs Now (Creative Commons BY NC)