

New York and California raise the minimum wage, Georgia's religious freedom bill vetoed, and Minnesota GOP's plans to cut women's health care: US state blog roundup for 26 March – 1 April

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

Northeast

In New Hampshire this week, *Granite Grok* [says](#) that the state's Republicans have often decided that they know how better to spend your money than you do, citing the example of State Senator Jeanie Forrester who led the fight to implement Medicaid expansion on the state.

On Wednesday, *Blue Mass* group [looks](#) at why Massachusetts is one of the US' most unequal states. They say that the state's US Senator, Elizabeth Warren is a 'great exception' and that the state mostly has the liberalism of professionals, rather than that of unions and FDR.

Moving down to the Empire State, *Capitol Confidential* has the [news](#) that the New York state Legislature has approved a budget which will see the state's minimum wage rise to \$15 an hour within three years. Upstate New York will see an increase to \$12.50 over the next five years. Staying in New York, *State of Politics* [looks](#) at the unfolding fight between New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory over the former's ban of non-essential travel to the Old North State after lawmakers there approved a law which is seen to discriminate against the transgendered. McCrory has labelled Cuomo a 'hypocrite' for his recent trip to Cuba which has a less than stellar record on human rights issues.

On Thursday, *PolitickerNJ* [argues](#) that New Jersey Governor Chris Christie would rather attack those who were working towards finding a solution to help Atlantic City than work towards a compromise or look towards the real source of the problem.

Over in the Keystone State, *Raging Chicken Press* [says](#) that the state has breathed a sigh of relief as, after nine months of bipartisan bickering, the 'crappy GOP budget' has become law.

South

The Progressive Pulse [says](#) that the fallout from the state's discriminatory House Bill 2 (which we discussed last week) has continued, with more and more states and cities banning travel to North Carolina, and inviting the state's businesses to leave.



Georgia Governor Nathan Deal Credit: Jamelle Bouie (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-2.0)

Monday saw Georgia Governor Nathan Deal veto a similar religious freedom bill which many had criticized as discriminatory. *GeorgiaPol* [writes](#) that even as Deal was vetoing the bill Republicans in the state's Senate were calling for a special session to override the Governor's veto.

Writing from the Sunshine State, *Beach Peanuts* [says](#) that a strict new law cuts off women's access to health care, cancer screenings, and abortion. They say that the law comes after the state Legislature redefined the trimesters of pregnancy in order to 'virtually' defund Planned Parenthood.

Alabama's *Yellowhammer* this week has the [news](#) that state lawmakers are preparing to bring forth articles of impeachment against the state's Governor Robert Bentley, over his affair with senior advisor Rebekah Mason, who resigned this week.

Heading west to Mississippi, *Y'all Politics* [says](#) that the state's House has passed a bill which would allow the state's prison system to execute prisoners using a firing squad if officials decide lethal injections are too expensive, or are unavailable.

On Tuesday, *Arkansas blog* [reports](#) that despite raising the minimum wage to \$8 an hour in 2014, the state's unemployment rate is at a record low, and that the increase has not been the 'economic body blow' that some on the right had predicted.

Midwest

On Thursday, *Progress Illinois* [writes](#) that Chicago's Mayor, Rahm Emanuel has capitalized on the controversy over North Carolina's religious freedom law by asking his advisers to look for North Carolina firms which they can convince to move to the Windy City.

In Wisconsin this week, *The Political Environment* [says](#) that there has been a 'UGE' outbreak of 'Trump Derangement Syndrome' with those on the right in the state falling over themselves to foil Trump in next week's primary, despite their role in helping to foster his appeal in recent years.

Up in Minnesota, *MN Progressive Project* [says](#) that, like in Florida, the state's Republicans have been targeting Planned Parenthood via a new bill which would cut off funding for preventative women's healthcare.

Heading west, *South Dakota War College* [writes](#) that while the state's GOP are doing a good job of fielding legislative candidates (as usual), the same is not the case for state Democrats, who have 26 seats in the state legislature still needing candidates. Staying in the Mount Rushmore State, *Dakota Free Press* [says](#) that one of the legislative candidates, Stace Nelson, [reckons](#) that a good way to tackle corruption would be to put Cabinet secretaries up for election. They comment that it would be difficult to find enough candidates to compete for the 22

Cabinet posts and hard to get voters to actually vote for them, given the current lack of attention given to down-ballot elections.

Moving north, *Say Anything* reports that North Dakota's Governor, Jack Dalrymple has [stated](#) that there is no crisis in the state, and that the state has not overspent on its budget, and that despite the downturn in commodity prices, the state's unemployment rate is at 2.8 percent.

West and Pacific

In Montana this week, *Intelligent Discontent* [says](#) that gubernatorial candidate, Greg Gianforte has in the past donated to some of the state's most reactionary Republicans, including secessionists and one state Representative who claimed that President Obama was the equivalent of Hitler.

On Monday, Colorado's *The Spot* [reports](#) that in another sign that the marijuana industry has gone mainstream, representatives from the cannabis industry are planning a fundraiser for Representative Ed Perlmutter (D). Staying in the Centennial State, *Colorado Peak Politics* [says](#) that the state's US Senator, Cory Gardner (R) has threatened to take President Obama to court if he insists on shutting down the military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and bringing detainees to the US mainland, including to Colorado prisons.

This week, *Progressnow NM* [writes](#) that President Obama has a solution for New Mexico Governor, Susana Martinez's budget mess – a mess caused by the state's over reliance on royalties from oil and gas productions that have now faltered given falling energy prices. They say that the federal Bureau of Land Management is proposing a new rule which would require oil and gas companies to plug leaks and reduce the amount of natural gas and pollutants they release or burn. They would then have to capture these gases and pay royalties to states and to the federal government.

Moving west, *Blog for Arizona* has the [news](#) that Governor Doug Ducey has signed a 'dark money on steroids' bill into law. The bill will loosen state control over anonymous campaign donations and reform some campaign finance laws.



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

California's *Flash Report* [says](#) that state legislators have struck a deal to implement a \$15 wage increase in the Golden State without sending it to California voters as a proposition. The minimum wage will now rise in stages, hitting its target mark of \$15 in 2022.

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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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