

Sestak's feud with Democrats in Pennsylvania, Florida Governor Scott's video attack on angry constituent, and Indiana sued by ACLU over abortion law: US state blog roundup for 2 – 8 April

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

Northeast

On Thursday this week, New Hampshire's *Miscellany: Blue profiles* a Republican state Senate candidate, Bob Giuda, who they say is 'militantly anti-government'. They comment that a number of essays Giuda has posted on social media show that he supports Nevada's rancher Cliven Bundy's armed confrontation with federal officials, and has also called President Obama a 'racist, marxist, muslim [sic]'.

Moving on to the Green Mountain State, *VT Digger reports* that the state House has given its approval to a bill which would raise the state's legal smoking age from 18 to 21, as well as increasing tax on tobacco products.

Last week saw New York state pass a budget which included an increase of the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. *Capitol Confidential says* that with the measure now passed, advocates in the legislature have now made a proposal to deter wage theft, an issue that is often felt in the restaurant and construction industries. Staying in the Empire State, *State of Politics* has the [news](#) that 2014 gubernatorial candidate, Zephyr Teachout has raised \$530,000 in her bid for the state's 19th US House district, which will be an open seat given that GOP Representative Chris Gibson has his eyes on the Governor's office.



New Jersey Governor Chris Christie Credit: Gage Skidmore (CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Following the water quality crisis in Flint, Michigan, concern about lead in water supplies has spread to other states and cities, with New Jersey being no exception. *PolitickerNJ reports* Tuesday that the state's Governor, Chris Christie, has refused to authorize any extra spending to address lead contamination in public schools' drinking water, even after it was found that more than half of Newark's public schools tested positive for such contamination.

PoliticsPA writes this week on the feud between US Senate candidate Joe Sestak and his own party. They [say](#) that the former Congressman isn't like by the Democratic establishment, a rift that goes back to his defeat of Arlen Specter in 2010's Democratic primary for the Keystone State's 7th Congressional district.

South

Loose Lips of Washington DC [writes](#) that the District's Council Chairman is cautious on Mayor Muriel Bowser's proposed minimum wage increase to \$15 an hour; suggesting instead that any increase should be linked to increases in neighboring counties in Maryland.

Speaking of the Old Line State, *Political Maryland* [says](#) that on Monday the state's GOP Governor, Larry Hogan vetoed a bill that would bring public accountability and transparency to a part of the state government's decision-making. They comment that given that Hogan stated that the bill would block road and bridge projects (which they say it would not), the veto must be an April Fool's joke.

This week could have been better for Florida Governor Rick Scott, who was subjected to a tirade of abuse from a constituent in a Starbucks in Gainesville. *Saint Peters blog* [says](#) that the woman who upbraided Scott, Cara Jennings, is no stranger to controversy, having been a founding member of a protest group in 2006. *Beach Peanuts* [writes](#) that Scott appears to have had the last word, putting out an attack ad against Jennings to get revenge and as a way to raise money for his future political endeavors.

Heading west to Alabama, *Yellowhammer* has the [news](#) that the state's legislature has overridden Governor Rob Bentley's recent veto of the state's budget; Bentley had asked for more money for Medicaid. In response to the veto, Bentley has now suggested that there may be significant cuts to the state's Medicaid program in the pipeline.

Continuing on to Arkansas, *Talk Business* [comments](#) that even though the state's unemployment rate hit an all-time low in February, the unemployment rate amongst working-age blacks in the state has stubbornly remained in double digits since 2008.

Midwest

On Monday, *eclecta blog* is very [concerned](#) that Michigan Governor Rick Snyder's administration may be planning not to replace lead water lines in Flint. They write that given that Flint's water lead levels are falling because of the phosphate added to the water since the lead crisis began six months ago, Snyder's administration may just simply be waiting until levels have dropped enough so that residents can use their water again.



Florida Governor Rick Scott Credit: Gage Skidmore (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)



Governor Mike Pence of Indiana Credit: Gage Skidmore (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Heading south to the Hoosier State, *Indy Democrat Blog* [argues](#) that the mess that Governor Mike Pence has made makes him vulnerable in the fall, when he's up for re-election. They say that Pence remains unpopular because of issues like the RFRA debacle where he was forced to back down, and the more recent bill which stops doctors from performing abortions for reasons like the potential disability of the fetus. *Indy Politics* [reports](#) this week that the ACLU has filed a lawsuit over the state's aforementioned new abortion law. They say that the ACLU of Indiana has claimed that the law violates due process and equal protection under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.

In addition to holding its presidential primary this week, Wisconsin also saw elections for its Supreme Court. *The Political Environment* [says](#) that the reelection of Rebecca Bradley over JoAnne Kloppenberg reflects the same results that have kept GOP Governor Scott Walker in office for more than five years.

The Iowa Republican also talks elections, [commenting](#) that Patty Judge – the Democratic candidate for the state's US Senate seat, has been seen only once in the state in the month since she began her campaign. They say that the seat is rated 'Safe Republican', and call Judge's efforts, a 'phantom candidacy'.

Over in North Dakota, *Say Anything* [argues](#) that Governor Jack Dalrymple was correct in refusing to agree to a special session of the Legislature to address budget issues. They [write](#) that under state law, the Legislature can only call itself back into if it has not used all of its constitutionally limited session days; if it has, then only the governor can recall them back into session.

West and Pacific

Progressnow NM [writes](#) this week that New Mexico's Lieutenant Governor, John Sanchez has been showing just how extreme his anti-abortion views are with his recent social media postings which accuse Planned Parenthood of harvesting and experimenting on the body parts of aborted fetuses.

Idaho's *Eye on Boise* [reports](#) that the state's Governor, Butch Otter, has vetoed a bill which would have permitted the Bible to be used in the state's public schools for reference purposes. In his veto message, Otter stated that allowing the bill to become law would contravene the state's constitution which prohibits religious books from being used in the state's schools.

Oregon Catalyst, meanwhile [says](#) that the rapid growth of the state's budget is continuing, and has gone from \$12.5 billion in 2005-07 to \$19 billion now.

Heading south, *Fox & Hounds* [argues](#) that rent controls are the wrong solution for the Golden State's housing crisis. They write that such government imposed regulations and fees make it more expensive to live in California, and that a better solution would be to expand affordable housing stocks. Staying in California, *Flashreport* [bemoans](#) another state government intervention – the recent decision to increase the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour. They say

the \$15 rate has no historical justification, and that members of the state's legislature have a view of economics which is divorced from reality.

Over in Hawaii this week, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [says](#) that lobbyists have spent nearly \$1 million to influence state legislators in January and February on issues such as health care, energy, and prisons.

Featured [image](#) credit: Joe Sestak Credit: [Patrick Gage Kelley](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-NC-SA-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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