

# Hillary Clinton brings in Bill on the economy, Obama's new overtime regs, and America's obsession with oil: US national blog roundup for 14 – 20 May

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

## Jump to

[The 2016 campaign and the primaries](#)  
[The Democratic Campaign and the Candidates](#)  
[The Republican Campaign and Donald Trump](#)  
[President Obama and the Administration](#)

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

## The 2016 Campaign and the primaries

With Donald Trump now the undisputed Republican presidential nominee, many in the GOP are looking at how a third party presidential bid to rival Trump might coalesce. On Saturday, *American Thinker* [looks](#) at the Libertarian presidential nomination field, writing that the leading candidates are former New Mexico Governor, Gary Johnson, entrepreneur, Austin Petersen, and John McAfee of anti-virus fame. *The Federalist* [argues](#) that GOP voters should think twice before voting for the likely Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson as a Trump protest vote. Why? On questions of religious liberty, Johnson is more likely to take a similar position to a secular Democrat than a Republican. *Red State* [reports](#) this week that Ohio Governor, John Kasich has ruled out making a third party run in this year's election cycle, stating that "running third party doesn't feel right". *The Hill's Congress blog* gives [the real reason](#) why an independent can't be president – the Commission on Presidential



Former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson Credit: Gage Skidmore, (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Debates, which has the “true mission” of denying independents and third-party candidates a national platform during the fall debate season. *No more mister nice blog*, meanwhile [argues](#) that there is no chance that a third-party candidate would get 21 percent of the vote, as some have suggested.

Speaking of Trump, what are his chances of winning in November? *Kevin Drum reckons* that a 30 percent chance – or even less – is about right. At the moment, every Clinton vs. Trump poll is making headlines. But they shouldn’t, write *Monkey Cage*. They [argue](#) that every attempt to explain every poll movement based on something that a candidate recently did or didn’t do is over explaining, given that we’re seeing a “sequence of noisy measurements”. On similar lines, *Outside the Beltway says* that while the Clinton/Trump polls are tightening, we shouldn’t pay that much attention to them five months out from the election. *The Upshot* meanwhile [argues](#) that the big picture in the Trump vs. Clinton fight is all in how it’s framed, with Trump inviting people to remember a time which is now gone, while Clinton will try to convince voters that times are actually quite good.

On Monday, *The Atlantic comments* that 2016 is a terrible year for political transparency, with both party’s frontrunners, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, hostile to the idea of sharing information with voters. In Trump’s case, it’s his tax records, in Clinton’s it’s the secrecy of using a private server for emails she sent when she was Secretary of State.

Is there too much money in politics? Many think so – especially when it comes to presidential politics. *The Federalist cautions* that those who tend to push campaign finance reform tend to do favor laws which would work to their own benefit, by restricting the ability of political outsiders to run for office. Speaking of finances, *Kevin Drum writes* that running for the Oval Office can be a highly profitable investment, given that Donald Trump’s income from the past year appears to be on the order of \$40-100 million according to his latest FEC filing. That said, Donald Trump’s money could actually end up being his undoing. *PoliticusUSA writes* that by not checking Trump’s tax returns – given the revelation that his old returns show he paid no taxes – the GOP may have lost the election.

In this year’s primary elections, turnout has been unusually high – 26.1 million for the GOP and almost 22.2 million for the Democrats so far. *Sabato’s Crystal Ball says* that if the 2008 race is any guide, then these high turnout numbers may be a good indicator from what might happen in the fall election.

*Red State reports* on the result of a new poll which shows that the Peach State is now also a potential swing state in

this year's election. Both Trump and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton are now tied in Georgia, something they partially put down to the GOP primary creating a great deal of animus towards Trump, meaning that he is struggling to maintain that party's traditional voter base. Could the Keystone State be an electoral tipping point this fall? *FiveThirtyEight* [thinks so](#). They say that while most people don't think of Pennsylvania as a swing state, it has gradually been moving towards the GOP in recent years, and is likely to be the next most winnable state for the party after Florida and Ohio – more traditional swing states.

*Powerline* [suggests](#) that this year's presidential contest might just be the greatest reality TV show of all time. *The Atlantic* reckons that 2016 may well prove to be a turning point in American politics; especially if Donald Trump wins. *Monkey Cage*, meanwhile [says](#) that Donald Trump's campaign will only increase the Democrat's advantage in data and analytics, given that the party has been developing its own data infrastructure, while the GOP's has atrophied in recent years.

Turning to downballot races, *PolitiucusUSA* [writes](#) Tuesday that the Koch brothers are planning to spend \$42 million to keep Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) in power. *Roll Call's David Hawkings* meanwhile [says](#) that if the Democrats were to retake the Senate this November, then “old white guys” would be less important; at least six committees would be run by women, and the Senate would see its first floor leader born in the 1950s.

### **The Oregon and Kentucky primaries**

Ahead of the primaries *FiveThirtyEight* [looks](#) at what we can expect, commenting that they are the least meaningful of the month. They predict a Clinton win in Kentucky by 2 percentage points, and Sanders to take Oregon by 15. Clinton did indeed win in Kentucky – though by an astonishingly close margin, [according](#) to *PolitiucusUSA*. As expected, Sanders picked up a win in Oregon, [reports](#) *Outside the Beltway*. The only Republican left on the slate, Trump won in Oregon, though not by as much (67 percent) as he should have, [writes](#) *Red State*.

### **The Democratic Campaign and the Candidates**

*TPM* [encourages](#) Democrats to look at the big picture of the election. Every day the Clinton and Sanders camps spend attacking each other, is less time they could spend unifying the party in order to defeat Donald Trump. *The Conscience of a Liberal*, meanwhile [says](#) that the week's primaries are a “Democratic Groundhog Day” in that they don't really matter given that Bernie Sanders now cannot defeat Clinton on pledged delegates.

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

#### **Hillary Clinton**

- What's the dumbest political prediction of the year? That Hillary Clinton will pick a prominent Republican woman as her Veep ([Crooks & Liars](#))
- Former President Bill Clinton will lend a hand on the economy in a Hillary Clinton administration ([PolitiucusUSA](#))
- Is Clinton's putting Bill in charge of the economy, her worst mistake ever? ([Powerline](#))
- ... and is it because she's “feeling the Bern”? ([United Liberty](#))
- Clinton's foreign policy will differ from Obama's – though at the moment, it's hard to tell just how ([Political Animal](#))
- Clinton may make a weird kind of history in June 7<sup>th</sup>, by winning all nine of the Clinton counties in the US ([Kevin Drum](#))



Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Credit: Hillary for America (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0)

- Given that she spent money in Kentucky, does this mean that Clinton is finally taking Bernie Sanders seriously? ([Red State](#))
- What it means for Clinton to be magnanimous towards Sanders ([Political Animal](#))
- How the media have destroyed Hillary Clinton ([Townhall](#))
- If Clinton loses the election, the Democrats will only have themselves to blame ([Red State](#))
- A pro-Clinton SuperPAC have kicked off the general election with a \$6 million ad buy which actually quotes Donald Trump ([Daily Kos](#))
- Could Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren have beaten Hillary Clinton for the Democratic nomination? Maybe. ([The Upshot](#))
- As of Wednesday, Clinton needed 92 delegates to clinch the Democratic nomination ([PoliticusUSA](#))
- Instead of “soft-peddling” a public option for Medicare as she did this week, she should expand it so that people of all ages can buy into the scheme ([The Hill's Congress blog](#))
- Clinton is planning to campaign on jobs on pay, despite having Donald Trump as an opponent ([Daily Kos](#))
- Clinton slammed Trump this week, claiming that he's not qualified to be president ([PoliticusUSA](#))
- Is Clinton electorally lucky, or is there something else at play? ([American Thinker](#))
- How to make GOP men like Hillary Clinton – include Bill ([Wonkblog](#))

## **Bernie Sanders**

- The Democrats really want Sanders' supporters to vote for Trump ([Red State](#))
- Many Sanders voters are actually independents – they could be key to Clinton's electoral success ([FiveThirtyEight](#))
- Sanders pushed back at critics this week after reports of violence and death threats from his supporters at the Nevada Democratic Convention ([Americablog](#))
- How Bernie's “bros” are undermining him ([The American Prospect](#))
- The problem isn't Sanders' supporters – it's Sanders himself ([Daily Kos](#))
- Is Sanders hurting Clinton electorally by staying in the race? ([FiveThirtyEight](#))



Senator Bernie Sanders Credit: Senate Democrats (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

- Why Sanders isn't giving up – he wants to keep the pressure on Clinton ( [Hit & Run](#) )
- Sanders may have picked the wrong year for a political revolution ( [Wonkblog](#) )
- Should we continue to give Sanders the benefit of the doubt? ( [Political Animal](#) )
- The Sanders campaign has admitted that it wants to hurt Clinton, even if that benefits Trump ( [Daily Kos](#) )
- The sad decline and fall of Bernie Sanders ( [Kevin Drum](#) )
- A single-payer plan from Sanders would still be very expensive ( [The Upshot](#) )
- Behind the scenes, Sanders is personally calling Democrats to reassure them that he will unite with the party to beat Donald Trump ( [PoliticusUSA](#) )
- Sanders has been the recipient of three FEC investigations, and yet no Democrats have accused him of corruption ( [PoliticusUSA](#) )
- After being against them, Sanders is now for superdelegates ( [Daily Kos](#) )
- Sanders far outraised Clinton in April, to the tune of nearly \$27 million ( [PoliticusUSA](#) )

## The Republican Campaign and Donald Trump

On Sunday, *Daily Kos* [looks](#) at the difference between US House Speaker Paul Ryan and Donald Trump, explaining that when it comes to budget policies, there's not that much of a difference. That said, it turns out that voters prefer Trump to Ryan. The GOP really is dead in that case, [says Red State](#). Or is it? *Townhall* [says](#) it's too early to give the Republican Party the last rites given that some were doing the same in 2010 when the Tea Party was on the rise. Taking a more academic view, *Mischiefs of Faction* [wonder](#) what happened to the GOP. *Kevin Drum* meanwhile [wonders](#) if Trump will spell the end for constitutional conservatism.

*Hit & Run* has [six things](#) that Trump has in common with the Republican Party, while *Townhall* [reckons](#) that Trump and the GOP are "slow-walking" towards unity. *Red State* meanwhile [says](#) that Trump's team are purging dissents from the Republican Party one state convention at a time. *The Federalist* [comments](#) that Beltway conservatives need to snap out of their bubble on Trump, and come to terms with the seriousness of the problem that he represents. In recent weeks the Bush family have opted not to support Donald Trump. *Red State* [explains](#) why they're not obligated to – Trump's loyalty to the GOP is paper thin. *The Atlantic* [says](#) that Republican leaders now face an impossible task if they wish to salvage their party without alienating voters. This is even harder given that Republican voters want GOP leaders to unite behind Trump, as *Red State* [reckons](#).

On Tuesday, *The Federalist* [argues](#) that the #NeverTrump movement is both anti-American and hypocritical, given that it disputes the will of GOP voters. *Red State* [disagrees](#), writing that no-one actually has to vote for Trump despite his being the nominee.

*American Thinker* [writes](#) on how the GOP can stop losing the debate over the minimum wage to the Democrats – they need to embrace it, but on the local level. *Townhall* [wonders](#) why conservatives don't name their enemy more often, given that they say the left are “destroying the foundational values” of the country. *PoliticusUSA* meanwhile [reckons](#) that the GOP is facing extinction as there are now as many millennial voters as baby boomers.

## Donald Trump

- The conservative case for Donald Trump ([American Thinker](#))
- How Trump is a “disrupter” ([Townhall](#))...
- ...who wants to fill the country's “victory deficit” ([American Thinker](#))
- Trump is reaching an uneasy “entente” with the GOP elite – and it may help him to win in November ([The American Prospect](#))
- Despite his claims, Trump is not creating millions of new GOP voters ([Red State](#))
- Though he's a billionaire, Trump apparently doesn't have enough cash to fund his own campaign ([Red State](#))  
...
- ...which is no surprise that it looks like he only makes \$500,000 a year ([TPM](#))...
- ...meaning that myth of his self-funding campaign is now dead ([PoliticusUSA](#))
- Trump may be reluctant to release his taxes because the IRS may have been giving him a break ([Townhall](#))
- Trump had a bad 24 hours this week, and instead of trying to fix things, he is “angry tweeting” CNN ([PoliticusUSA](#))
- Just how badly might Trump lose in November? ([Red State](#))
- Though might traditional polling be underestimating Trump's true strength? ([The Upshot](#))
- His supporters probably aren't lying to pollsters ([FiveThirtyEight](#))
- Trump is a shameless liar. So why isn't he being called out on it? ([Daily Kos](#))
- Trump's policy plans would destroy the US government – can he get away with it? ([Kevin Drum](#))
- Why Trump should abolish the Department of Education if he reaches the White House ([American Thinker](#))

- His policy on trade won't be a hit with Bernie Sanders' supporters either ( [Monkey Cage](#))



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

- Did you fancy seeing Florida Senator Marco Rubio as Trump's vice-presidential pick? Well you're out of luck ( [Red State](#))
- Why the GOP's convention delegates should make Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska Trump's running mate ( [The Federalist](#))
- Political activist, Ralph Nader actually has some nice things to say about Donald Trump ( [Hit & Run](#))
- Trump has been able to do what Obama could not: crush social conservatives ( [Red State](#))
- Unsurprisingly, social conservatives are falling behind Trump ( [Daily Kos](#))
- Trump's relationship with the UK has not gotten off to the best start after Prime Minister David Cameron described Trump's plan to ban Muslims from entering the US as "stupid" ( [Daily Kos](#))
- Also on UK/Trump relations – Trump this week challenged the new London Mayor Sadiq Khan to an IQ-off ( [Red State](#))
- What are Trump's views on women? ( [The Atlantic](#))
- To some, Trump is an endless enigma ( [Powerline](#))
- Trump's supporters are more likely to self-identify as racists, according to a new poll ( [Red State](#))
- The five types of Trump supporters you meet on the internet ( [Red State](#))
- Trump's wife Melania this week insisted that her husband is "not Hitler" ( [FreakOutNation](#))
- This week Trump mocked New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's weight ( [Red State](#))
- Trump's lack of introspection is a big signal that he may not do the best job in the White House ( [Caffeinated Politics](#))
- As the GOP's presidential nominee, Trump will soon have access to classified briefings ( [Red State](#))
- Do we really want Donald Trump to have access to the country's nuclear codes? ( [The Lonely Conservative](#))
- Trump's foreign policy advisor has defended Trump...by claiming that he's lying about his policies ( [Red State](#))
- As of Wednesday, there were only 77 delegates between Trump and the GOP nomination ( [Outside the Beltway](#))
- Can Trump be trusted by conservatives on nominations for the Supreme Court? ( [Powerline](#))
- Why we shouldn't be fooled by Trump's Supreme Court shortlist ( [Hit & Run](#))

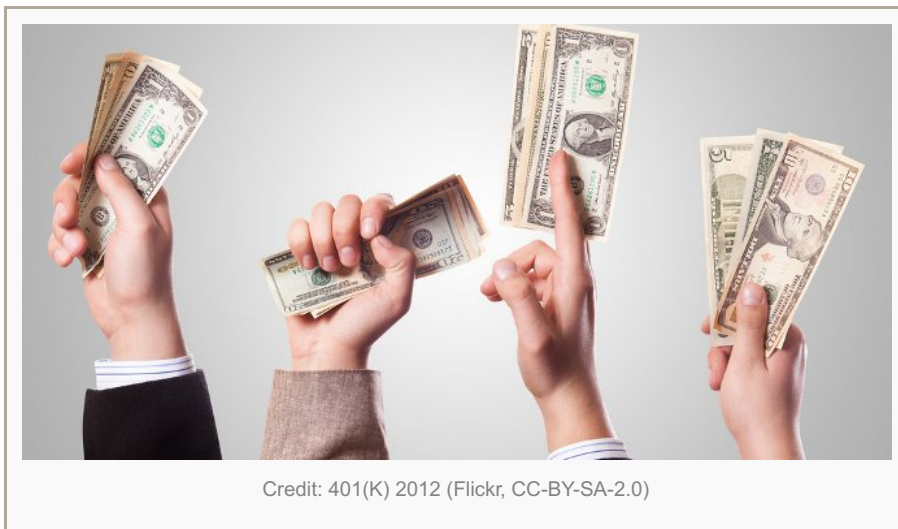
- Trump's SCOTUS picks are mostly white men, but they are still unconventional ([FiveThirtyEight](#))
- Trump is considering naming his cabinet at the GOP convention in July. Trouble is, that's illegal ([PoliticusUSA](#))
- One of Trump's Maryland delegates won't make it to the GOP convention – he'll be too busy sitting in prison ([Red State](#))
- In his thinking about transitioning into the White House, Trump has tapped one of Mitt Romney's advisors ([Federal Insider](#))
- Is Trump's campaign one big commercial for Trump Inc? ([America blog](#))
- The previously pro-gun ban Donald Trump has now been endorsed by the National Rifle Association ([Red State](#))
- It turns out that the Trump campaign has raised far less for veterans than had originally been promised ([FreakOutNation](#))

## President Obama and the Administration

On Monday, [Political Animal reports](#) on President Obama's weekend commencement address at Rutgers University. They say that the president obliquely criticized the rhetoric of Donald Trump by stating that:

*Suggesting that we can build an endless wall along our borders, and blame our challenges on immigrants – that doesn't just run counter to our history as the world's melting pot; it contradicts the evidence that our growth and our innovation and our dynamism has always been spurred by our ability to attract strivers from every corner of the globe.*

[The Federalist](#) also comments on Obama's Rutgers address, [writing](#) that despite his statement that he believes in open debate and tolerance, his administration's directive on transgender-friendly bathrooms shows that he still has one foot firmly planted in the illiberal far left.



Wednesday say new rules issued by Department of Labor which mean that more than 4 million workers are now eligible for overtime pay. [The Atlantic says](#) that the measure – which states that most workers earning up to \$47,476 a year must be paid time and a half overtime when they work more than 40 hours a week – has been praised by unions, but criticized by business interests. [Hit & Run comments](#) that Obama's new overtime regulation will hurt more than they help, mostly because employers are likely to limit their employees' hours, as well as other forms of



employee compensation.

*Political Animal* [looks](#) at what the Obama Administration has done to reduce income inequality, including Obamacare, taxing the wealthy, and the new overtime rules mentioned above.

On Friday, *Red State* [wonders](#) if President Obama will indict Hillary Clinton in order to save his party. They reason that by allowing the Justice Department to indict the former Secretary of State over her use of a private email server while in government, it would pave the way for Bernie Sanders to become the nominee, who may have a better chance against Donald Trump.

## The Beltway and the Supreme Court

*Red State* [writes](#) that the House of Representative's move towards impeaching the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service, Josh Koskinen could be a signal that Congress has finally gotten its act together to do its job properly. Staying in the House, *Daily Kos* [reports](#) that Democratic Representatives this week called out House Republicans who successfully added a provision targeting LGBT worker for discrimination into the must-pass National Defense Authorization Act.

On Wednesday, *The Atlantic* [introduces](#) us to the first openly gay army secretary in US history – Eric Fanning – who was confirmed by the Senate this week, eight months after he was nominated by President Obama.

*Mischiefs of Faction* [writes](#) this week that the last Congress – the 113<sup>th</sup> – was very unusual in terms of cloture votes; nearly one third of all roll call votes, dealt with cloture votes, compared to only 15 percent in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. It also stands out in terms of its relatively low number of amendments compared to previous sessions, and to the current one.

Moving on to the Supreme Court, *Kevin Drum* [looks](#) at what really happened in Monday's contraceptive mandate case. They say that both sides will claim victory, in that women will not lose the right to contraception, but religiously affiliated nonprofits will not have to pay fines for not filling out a form informing the government that they object to

providing birth control coverage. Looking ahead, *FiveThirtyEight* [says](#) this week that, with only 12 cases on the docket through to June 2017, the Supreme Court's caseload is looking to be the lightest it has been for 70 years.



## Foreign policy, defense and trade

*Informed Comment* [looks](#) at past commitments by Washington that there would be no US troops in Iraq and Syria – until there were. Despite maintaining that his administration would never send American troops into Syria, there are now 300 Special Operations forces in the country, and US forces are being increasingly involved in Iraq once again. Speaking of Syria, *The American Interest* [says](#) that the US is flailing before Russia over the civil war in that country, after Secretary of State met with his opposite number, Sergei Lavrov who has refused to move on ousting Syrian leader Assad. *The Daily Signal* [reports](#) that US airpower in Iraq is bolstering Kurdish peshmerga's fight against ISIS there.

On Friday, *White House Dossier* [discussed](#) another Obama foreign policy “quagmire” – Libya. They say that US military advisers may soon be deployed there to assist in the fight against ISIS.

Moving on to trade issues, *The Daily Signal* [reckons](#) that the US is falling behind in world trade because of special interest tariffs. *Monkey Cage*, meanwhile [says](#) that both Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders are wrong when they argue that free trade agreements such as NAFTA cost jobs; they actually increase jobs overall. It's just that most of the benefits of these new jobs are not shared equally.

## Obamacare and health policy

On Tuesday, *Daily Kos* [writes](#) that some of the least popular GOP governors – such as Maine's Paul LePage and Matt Bevin of Kentucky – are the ones who refused to expand Medicaid in their state. Coincidence?



Turning to Obamacare, *The Daily Signal* [writes](#) that some of the program's customers may see higher rates next year, mostly because of the decline in Obamacare providers. *Kevin Drum* this week (finally) has some of what they say is [actual bad news](#) about Obamacare – dissatisfaction with the program among enrollees is growing. *American Thinker* meanwhile [looks](#) at Obamacare's spending problem, which is mostly caused because insurers are no longer allowed to exclude those with pre-existing conditions, and are also required to offer a long list of unnecessary procedures and treatments.

*Daily Kos* [says](#) this week that the example of a hospital charging \$629 for a Band-Aid for a child's finger shows that there is still a great deal which is wrong with the health care system.

More than sixty years on from the Supreme Court's landmark *Brown V. Board of Education* ruling which ended segregation, there is still an issue of segregation in health, [comments](#) *The Atlantic*. They comment that segregation is "baked into" the ways in which health care is discussed by people and institutions.

## The economy and society

On Saturday, *Townhall* [examines](#) what's really holding back American workers. They say that it's a combination of a poor education system, a culture which no longer appreciates physical work, and the country's welfare system. Still on the topic of workers and society, *Hit & Run* [examines](#) a new study which finds that the middle classes are just as likely to see their policy preferences make it into government as the rich are.

*The Atlantic* [looks](#) at America's obsession with oil – an obsession which many presidents have found extremely difficult to address. They say that politicians seem to be very wary of telling Americans to use less oil, given that polls show that they want their fuel to be reliable, safe, and cheap.

Recent weeks have seen the debate over whether or not the transgendered should be able to use whichever bathroom they most identify with; the Obama Administration has gone as far as making an executive order to this effect concerning public schools. *The Daily Signal* [says](#) that the right to constitutional privacy is missing in the

bathroom debate.

*Daily Kos* [writes](#) Wednesday that the so-called “war on cops”, as many conservatives have termed it, has actually coincided with the one of the safest years for police officers on record. *Wonkblog* this week [addresses](#) what they say is the myth that fewer people are going to prison, commenting that while more people are being sent to prison, the total population is falling since prisoners are serving shorter terms.

*Featured image: Oil jack in Texas Credit: Paul Lowry (Flickr, CC-BY-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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