

New Jersey's crazy political week, Delaware's death penalty repeal bill, and is it time for Michigan Governor Rick Snyder to resign?: US state blog roundup for 15 – 22 January

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

Northeast

On Wednesday this week, Maine's *Pinetree Politics* [says](#) that while the 'dream' of impeaching the state's Governor Paul LePage over his acts of political retribution now seems like a waste of time, some state legislators have called for the state to adopt a recall process which could help to get rid of the governor. They comment that such recalls tend to be disastrous and serve no purpose other than to make existing partisan bickering worse.

Moving on to the Green Mountain State, *VTDigger* [looks](#) at whether or not Vermont is actually the whitest state in the union. They comment that the population is just over 95 percent white – the same proportion as Maine – but that the state's demographic pattern is changing, with black Vermonters now making up 1 percent of the population compared to 0.5 percent in 2000.

In New York, *State of Politics* [writes](#) on the controversy over the emblem of the village of Whitesboro which has been labelled as racist as it shows a white man apparently strangling a Native American. They say that while the village's residents recently voted to keep the emblem, the mayor of Whitesboro will meet with Oneida Indian Nation to discuss the creation of a new seal for the town.



Casino in Atlantic City Credit: (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0)

PolitickerNJ [says](#) on Monday that with a new redistricting plan in the works, proposals to extend casino gambling beyond Atlantic City, and a constitutional amendment for pension contracts, New Jersey has had its craziest political week since the 'Bridgagate' story broke in 2013. Staying in New Jersey, *Save Jersey* [reports](#) that Governor Chris Christie has cancelled his presidential primary campaigning in New Hampshire to return home to deal with the effects of the massive blizzard that hit the eastern seaboard on Friday.

This week marks the end of the first year in office for Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf. *PoliticsPA* [looks](#) over the

governor's year, writing that highlights have included his moratorium on the state's death penalty, the introduction of online voter registration, while a major lowlight was the longest budget stalemate in the state's history, which is still ongoing.

South

In the First State this week, *Delaware Liberal* [reports](#) that the chair of the state House's Judiciary Committee has announced that he has released a bill which would repeal the death penalty in the state from the committee, and that it will soon go on the House's agenda. They say that the Speaker may have only committed to sending the bill to the House floor because of the assumption that the bill will be defeated.

Heading down to Virginia, *Bearing Drift* [says](#) that the state's Democrats are working very hard to allow the transgendered to use men and women's bathrooms. They write that the state's Republicans have put forth counter bills, including one which would mean that bathrooms could only be used by people of a specified 'anatomical sex'.

Meanwhile in the Sunshine State, *Saint Peters blog* [argues](#) that just because some cities in Florida hold their elections in odd numbered years and therefore have lower turnout rates does not necessarily mean that these municipalities are holding these elections at those times in order to 'reduce voting'. They say that voting in odd-numbered years means that there is less risk that local elections will be drowned out by presidential races.

Moving on to Alabama, *Yellowhammer* [comments](#) on some new statistics which show that the state's economy is punching below its weight. They say that while the state has 1.52 percent of the country's population, it only accounts for 1.2 percent of the economy, and suggest that the state's poor infrastructure might be part of the reason why it is underperforming.

On Tuesday, the *Arkansas Times* has the [news](#) that the US Supreme Court has refused to review a lower court ruling which struck down the state's ban on most abortions at the 12th week of pregnancy. The state has apparently spent nearly \$100,000 on attorney fees and the costs of the successful plaintiffs – the ACLU, who originally brought the case on behalf of Arkansas' abortion providers.

In Louisiana, *Something Like the Truth* [says](#) that it's time for the residents of the Pelican State to demand the truth about the state's budget for a change, now that Democratic Governor John Bel Edwards has replaced Bobby Jindal, who apparently left the state's budget in 'chaos'.

Midwest

On Friday, *Eclecta blog* [writes](#) that it's now time for Michigan's Governor, Rick Snyder to resign after a week of growing criticism against him over his handling of the water poisoning that has affected Flint over the past two years. They say that what began as a ploy to save money has now turned into a fully-fledged disaster which has resulted in an \$80 million bailout from the federal government.

Moving south, *Progress Illinois* [says](#) that, according to a new report, the Prairie State has lost \$53 million in a recent bond sale. They comment that the data might motivate state lawmakers to come together to agree a budget for the state.



Iowa Governor, Terry Branstad. credit: Gage Skidmore (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Blog for Iowa this week [looks](#) at responses to Governor Terry Branstad's Annual State of the State address. They comment that some have argued that Branstad's claims about job creation are distorted and untrue, and that the state's budget should not trade quality education for water quality in the state.

Heading north to Minnesota, *MN Progressive Project* [writes](#) Monday that the state's Governor, Mark Dayton has 'gone on the offensive' with initiatives for this year's legislative session. Dayton's plans include a \$220 million initiative on water quality, and \$1.4 billion in borrowing for new infrastructure projects.

Say Anything [blog reports](#) that a Colorado-based Native American group has filed a suit on behalf of plaintiffs from the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in North Dakota over that state's voter-ID laws. The suit argues that the state's voter ID laws are too restrictive because the identification documents they allow are expensive for some Native Americans to obtain.

Nebraska Appleseed [says](#) that Nebraskans have this week celebrated the introduction of a new health insurance program which would create a path to affordable health coverage for 77,000 Nebraskans who can currently not afford insurance.

West and Pacific

Montana's *Cowgirl* [blog](#) this week [says](#) that even a Conservative blogger is now questioning businessman and philanthropist (and gubernatorial candidate), Greg Gianforte's religious beliefs. Gianforte has refused to answer questions about his world views to voters, despite bankrolling many extremist religious groups, some of which teach creationism.

On Thursday, *Democratic Diva* [praises](#) Arizona's Democratic Caucus for 'acting like a damn opposition party in the state's newly begun 2016 legislative session. They report that Democratic lawmakers this week have argued 'valiantly...against atrocious harebrained GOP bills', though these bills are still likely to pass. Staying in the Grand Canyon State, *Blog for Arizona* [says](#) that the state Governor Doug Ducey's promise, made in his 2016 State of the State address, to lower taxes is a lie. They argue that Ducey's plans to eliminate state income tax are based on supply-side economic theories, and that similar tax reduction efforts have had little success in states like Wisconsin and Kansas.

This week California Governor Jerry Brown made his Annual State of the State address. *Fox & Hounds* [writes](#) that the address takes place against the backdrop of most Californians feeling 'meh' about the economic recovery, given the relatively uneven employment growth throughout the Golden State.

Heading out to the Aloha State, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [writes](#) Wednesday that Governor David Ige has asked for \$11 million in this current legislative session to finance programs to address homelessness in Hawaii. They say that while the plan would expand support and housing for Hawaii's homeless, it would also mean the formation of state teams to clear the homeless from state land.

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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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