

Budget holes across the states, Ohio GOP becomes the Trump Party, and the Maryland Assembly's "90 days of terror": US state blog roundup for 7-13 January

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

Northeast

On Monday, *VTDigger* [looks](#) at the budget pressures which face the Green Mountain State in 2017. They comment that there is likely to be a gap of \$70 million between state spending and revenue in the coming fiscal year, one which Governor Phil Scott has pledged to address with "more sustainable budgeting policies" to keep costs down.

Moving over to New Hampshire, *NH Labor News* [says](#) that in the Granite State's Senate, the first orders of business for the GOP will be Right to Work and concealed carry bills. The latter bill would repeal a near-century old law which requires people to hold a license to carry a concealed weapon.

Blue Mass Group [talks](#) on the state's budget process, arguing this week that it's not transparent with more context needed on the proposals made by the state legislature and the governor.

In Connecticut *Wait What?* [writes](#) Wednesday that while many of the state's public schools are among the best in the country, the massive achievement gap between rich and poor towns is a huge crisis.

RIFuture also [looks](#) ahead to the state legislative year, and wonders if 2017 will see a bill to tax and regulate marijuana given that Massachusetts voters approved a similar bill late last year.

Save Jersey [previews](#) New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's State of the State address this week, writing that his legacy will be shaped by the legislation he signs into law. With that in mind, they look at eight major bills that the Governor could sign soon from restoring sales tax cuts to hiring more judges.

South

Delaware Liberal has the [news](#) that the state's Governor-elect, John Carney will face a budget hole of \$350 million once he takes office. They suggest that to close the hole while staying loyal to the principles of the Democratic Party, Carney could legalize marijuana and tax it, raise the corporate franchise tax, and add two new top rates to the personal income tax.

On Tuesday, Maryland's *Monoblogue* [says](#) that the state's General Assembly is about to usher in "90 days of terror". They say that legislation such as a mandated sick leave bill and an expansion of the earned income tax credit are part of an effort by state Democrats (who are in power) to send bills which they know that GOP Governor, Larry Hogan will veto so that they can portray him as a "do-nothing" Governor ahead of the 2018 elections.

Heading south, *Blue Virginia* [says](#) that GOP state Delegate, Bob Marshall has been fired up in the current General Assembly session, pushing bills which would direct state school boards to only enact policies prohibiting discrimination if they recognized the "inherent differences" between the sexes.

On Tuesday, *The Progressive Pulse* has the [news](#) that the US Supreme Court has agreed to temporarily halt North

Carolina's special legislative elections. This comes after a lower court ordered the elections after the district maps were ruled to have been racially gerrymandered.

In the Sunshine State this week, *The Political Hurricane* [comments](#) that in Florida's new political landscape, Republicans are expanding – and that's something that Democrats should be worried about.

Heading west to Arkansas, *Arkansas Times* [says](#) that, with a GOP supermajority in both houses, the state's 91st General Assembly is going to be "the best". Highlights may include the state's own "bathroom bill", a law affecting how school employees can be fired, and more tax cuts.

Midwest

On Thursday, Ohio's *Plunderbund* [writes](#) that when Donald Trump is inaugurated on January 20th, the Ohio Republican Party will become the "Ohio Trump Party". Why? The Ohio GOP Chairman is now Jane Timken, who they describe as a "Trump surrogate" after a tightly contested vote by the state central committee. The change is a significant one as it will be the first time in the state's modern political history that a GOP party chairman will not be under the influence of a sitting Republican Governor.

Heading westwards, *Indy Politics* [looks](#) at state Republicans' agenda for 2017, which include fighting opioid abuse, creating a long-term road funding plan and the passage of a balance budget amendment.

On Friday, Wisconsin's *Political Environment* [says](#) that there is more evidence that information about climate change has been scrubbed from the state government websites, though they haven't been very thorough given how much climate change-related content is still extant.

Meanwhile, *MN Progressive Project* [urges](#) the state's GOP to stay out of citizens' "bedrooms, bathrooms, locker rooms and pants", after a House bill was introduced which would target transgender students by designating facilities like restrooms and locker rooms to be used based on people's sex.

South Dakota War College [wonders](#) on Wednesday if someone is planning to "monkey around" with the state's 2018 Congressional race, after several domains were purchased last year relating to Shantel Krebs, South Dakota's Secretary of State.

Moving north, *Say Anything blog* has the [news](#) that the North Dakota state legislature has withdrawn a bill which would have defined every internet-capable device in the state as a "pornography vending machine".

West and Pacific

On Tuesday, *Progressnow NM* [wonders](#) if 2017 will be the year that marijuana is legalized in New Mexico. They say that bills to legalize the drug were killed by state House Republicans three times in 2015 and 2016, but with Democrats in control now, the fourth time may be a charm.

Heading west to Arizona, *Democratic Diva* [says](#) that the GOP Governor, Doug Ducey, acted like a moderate during his State of the State address this week. With calls for more funding for education, child protection and drug treatment, Ducey's speech drew applause from state Democrats.

Moving north to Wyoming, *WyoFile* [says](#) that the state's 64th Legislature has opened with all attention on the state's revenue crunch. Public schools alone face a \$400 million funding shortfall, and a state prison is in dire need of repair.

Over in Idaho, *Eye on Boise* has the [news](#) that freshman state Senator, Dab Foreman (R) plans to introduce a bill which would impose the same penalties on a mother who had an abortion and the doctor who assisted her as for murder.

In the Golden State, *Flashreport* [writes](#) that California's government debt has risen to \$1.3 trillion, up from \$1.1 trillion in 2012.

Speaking of debts, Hawaii's state pension system has a \$12 billion shortfall [according](#) to *Honolulu Civil Beat*. The timing is not great; state revenues are expected to be \$155 million lower this year compared to what had been previously predicted.

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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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