

Previewing 2017 state legislative agendas, Florida Dems need political scientists, and how can Chris Christie redeem himself? : US state blog roundup for 31 December – 6 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 Thursday, *NH Labor News* [reports](#) that Chris Sununu has been sworn in as the Granite State's 82nd Governor. They say that in his inaugural address Sununu discussed public education, pushed for Right to Work legislation, but did not mention his plans to repeal the state's Medicaid Expansion, despite mentioning it throughout the campaign.

Heading West, *VTDiggers* [writes](#) that the state's legislature has entered a "new world" with new House and Senate Speakers, Lieutenant Governor, and Governor, and that state lawmakers have stated that creating a tight state budget is a top priority for 2017.

Down in the Empire State, *Capitol Confidential* [says](#) that Republican State Assemblyman Cliff Crouch has branded Republican Governor Andrew Cuomo's plan to create a 200-member taskforce to educate businesses on New York's higher minimum wage, a "personal Gestapo force". *State of Politics*, meanwhile has the [news](#) that Governor Cuomo this week has vetoed a bill which would have provided state reimbursement for legal services to the poor to county governments, a move which they say will disappoint many bipartisan advocates who have supported the bill.

Over in the Garden State, *Observer* has [ten ways](#) in which New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie can redeem himself in 2017. They include staying in the state, and working more closely with state Democrats.

RPRI of Rhode Island [reckons](#) that recreational marijuana and car taxes are among the issues which people should watch for at the statehouse this year.

South

On Monday, *Blue Virginia* [writes](#) that ahead of the special election in the State Senate's 22nd District, they will be voting for the Democrat, because their candidate is rooted in the community, and will be a voice for them rather than simply standing up to the government, as the Republican candidate wishes to do.

This week saw Democrat Roy Cooper take over as Governor in North Carolina. *The Daily Haymaker* [comments](#) that Cooper has put "the pedal to the metal" to the far left with plans for an executive action to expand Medicaid in the state, a move which they argue is not good fiscal practice.



Heading south, *FITS News* of South Carolina [reports](#) that state lawmakers have previewed the upcoming “financial disaster” which they say will involve record spending, borrowing and corruption in 2017.

On Thursday, Florida’s *Political Hurricane* [recommends](#) that the Sunshine State’s Democratic Party employ some political scientists. Why? They understand what works in politics, it would save the party money, and because political scientists seek to understand voters.

Over in Mississippi, *Y’all Politics* has the [news](#) that the “opening salvo” of the Magnolia State’s legislature has included bills to increase the minimum wage to \$9, require schools to collect students’ body mass index data, and to bring back school prayer.

Arkansas Blog has a [similar legislative preview](#) in the Natural State; highlights include a “bathroom bill” similar to North Carolina’s HB2 which would direct transgender people to use bathrooms that match the sex on their birth certificate.

Midwest



Ohio Governor John Kasich – Photo Credit: Governor Beshear (Creative Commons: BY-NC-ND 2.0)

On Saturday, Ohio’s *Plunderbund* [says](#) that Governor John Kasich has taken credit for improvements for the state’s residents as part of the 2014 Medicaid expansion in the Buckeye State despite all of its benefits being down to the Obama administration.

Heading west, *Indy Politics* [introduces](#) new GOP Governor Robert Holcomb’s picks for his administration. Staying in the Hoosier State, *Masson’s Blog* [looks](#) at the state’s Senate Joint Resolution 2 which would change the state’s constitution to provide for redistricting via a commission rather than by the state’s General Assembly.

MN Progressive Project [writes](#) Wednesday that a rift may already be forming among Minnesota’s state Republican Party, after the state GOP boss, Keith Downey stepped down, fueling speculation that he might challenge state House Speaker Kurt Daudt for the state’s governorship next year.

Moving on to South Dakota, *Dakota Free Press* [reports](#) that December saw a record number of concealed carry permits issued in the Mount Rushmore State, meaning that 96,000 such permits now exist there. They say that fears of mass shootings have driven up the number of concealed carry permits.

North Dakota’s *Say Anything* has the [news](#) that state lawmakers began the legislative session with revenues

significantly reduced. With so little money to spend, one of the big effects has been a 40 percent decline in registrations to lobby lawmakers.

West and Pacific

In Colorado this week, *Peak Politics* [says](#) that a recent report has founded that the state's Obamacare exchange, Connect for Health should be forced to repay nearly \$10 million in misspent funds.

Moving on to Montana, *Northern Broadcasting System* has the [news](#) that the state's archives have failed to retain "decades" worth of emails despite a law which requires important emails to be preserved.

Idaho's *Eye on Boise* [reports](#) that the state's lawsuit which held that the Obama administration acted illegally by imposing federal land use restrictions to protect the sage grouse has been thrown out by a federal district court judge.

Oregon Catalyst [lets](#) us know that Governor Kate Brown's chief of staff resigned this week, after reports of conflicts of interest.

Heading south to the Golden State, *Flashreport* [comments](#) that California's politicians keep raising the cost of living, citing measures like the recent minimum wage increase. Staying in California, *Fox & Hounds* [wonders](#) if a term as the state's Governor for Gavin Newsom (the current Lieutenant Governor) would simply represent another term for the incumbent, Jerry Brown.

Featured [image](#) Utah State Legislature, credit: [Mike Renlund](#) (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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