

State of the States: Cuomo meets Trump; Virginia shoots down bathroom bill and native Hawaiians' public health crisis: 14 – 20 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

In the Green Mountain state this week, *VTDigger* has the [news](#) that state Democrats are seeking a \$15 an hour minimum wage within 5 years. The current minimum wage sits at \$10 an hour, rising to \$10.50 next year, and then with inflation – the bill offered by House Democrats would ramp up minimum pay much more quickly.

In the Ocean State this week, *RI Future* [says](#) that some state representatives are still “trolling” LGBTQ marriages by voting against a package of bills to grant people a one-off permission to perform a marriage. The bill package – which is normally voted through as a matter of course – involves at least one gay couple.

Heading over to Connecticut, *Wait What?* [comments](#) that Governor Dannel Malloy’s “austerity” budget strategies are hurting the state, and that in this legislative session, state Democrats need to decide whether or not to continue the “disastrous” policies, or pass a “fair and honest” budget.

New York’s *State of Politics* [reports](#) this week that ahead of next year’s election, Democratic Governor, Andrew Cuomo has nearly \$22 million in his campaign account, having raised \$4.4 million in the last six months. Staying in the Empire State – and with Cuomo – *Capitol Confidential* [says](#) that the New York Governor met with Donald Trump on Wednesday to discuss Obamacare, infrastructure and homelessness.

Over in New Jersey, *Observer* [writes](#) on Tuesday that a new Rutgers-Eagleton poll has shown that most state voters are unaware of any of the likely major candidates in the state’s gubernatorial election, including Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno, who announced her candidacy this week.

South

On Thursday, *Blue Virginia* [says](#) that members of the state House’s General Laws subcommittee have voted to stop a “bathroom bill” from going to the full committee, killing the bill for the second year in a row.

In Kentucky, after a credit ratings agency revised its ratings of the state’s \$33 billion in public pension debt to negative, *Blue in the Bluegrass* [argues](#) that refusing to tax the rich has bankrupted the state.

Heading down to North Carolina, *The Progressive Pulse* [looks](#) at what’s at stake after the state’s General Assembly sued the federal and state Departments of Health and Human Services to prevent the expansion of Medicaid by Democrat, Roy Cooper. They say that the expansion could bring coverage to 500,000 people and prevent up to 1,000 deaths per year.

Moving south, *Fits News* [comments](#) that South Carolina Governor, Nikki Haley, who is currently in line for the US Ambassador to the UN job, is a “financial disaster” – as she has also been for the Palmetto State. Haley, they write, holds debts of between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 despite receiving a government salary and other benefits for the past six years.

In Mississippi this week, *Y'al Politics* has the [news](#) that State Senator Chris McDaniel has filed a bill which would limit state legislators to no more than two successive terms. McDaniel himself is on his third term in the state Senate.

Monday was Martin Luther King Jr. Day. In Arkansas it was also a public holiday to celebrate Confederate General Robert E. Lee's birthday. *Arkansas Times* [revisits](#) how the state came to observe Lee's birthday eight decades after the civil war's end.

Midwest

On Tuesday, *Plunderbund* [calls](#) Ohio Governor John Kasich "caged", referring to his "sweet song" about losing billions in federal dollars which is tone deaf to those in his state who will lose health insurance coverage as Republicans on Capitol Hill try to repeal Obamacare.

Moving north to Michigan, *Eclectablog* [says](#) that during his State of the State address this week, GOP Governor Rick Snyder spent 70 seconds discussing cows, and 90 seconds discussing the water crisis in Flint.

Meanwhile, in Indiana, *Indy Politics* [reports](#) that in his State of the State new Governor Eric Holcomb made it clear that the state lacks the money to meet \$1 billion of its annual road funding needs. This may mean that Holcomb believes that some tax increases will be needed in the near future to meet the shortfall.

On Sunday, *Blog for Iowa* [looks](#) at the top 10 legislative threats from the extreme right in the state, including plans to gut worker's rights, defund Planned Parenthood, and to introduce "Wild West gun laws".

Over in Minnesota, *MN Progressive Project* [says](#) that Minnesota US House Representative Jason Lewis has started off as expected by objecting to a federal government rule which would address the amount of lead in public drinking water and sponsoring his first bill to repeal the medical device excise tax.

Heading on to North Dakota, *Say Anything Blog* [covers](#) legislation being considered at the state house which would allow citizens to petition the state government to challenge public services which they feel are competing with private services.

West and Pacific

On Monday, ahead of Governor Susana Martinez's State of the State address, *Progress Now NM* gives their [guide](#) to fact-checking the Governor's speech, including that she aims to balance the state budget with \$700-\$2,100 cuts to state worker families.

Heading north to Montana, *Intelligent Discontent* [bemoans](#) the lack of media coverage for "Tier B" races in the state, after the new Superintendent of Public Instruction announced that she will likely phase out the Graduation Matter initiative which has actually increased graduation rates in the state by 6 percent.

In Idaho, *Eye on Boise* has the [latest](#) on the "brouhaha" around state Representative, Heather Scott after she issued a statement apologizing for earlier negative comments about other female House members.

Moving south to California, *Fox & Hounds* is very [skeptical](#) that the Golden State's high speed rail project will be completed for the \$68 billion that has recently been mooted – up from an original cost projection of \$33 billion.

Up in Alaska, *The Mudflats* [comments](#) that for better or for worse, Juneau still represents the state's citizens, and is encouraged by the newly formed House bipartisan coalition.

Finally over in the Aloha State, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [reports](#) that according to a new study, Native Hawaiians are facing a public health crisis.

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