

State of the States: New York and California push sanctuary policies, Flint's water bill subsidy ends, and North Dakota's medical marijuana ballot that wasn't: 4 – 10 February

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2017/02/15/state-of-the-states-new-york-and-california-push-sanctuary-policies-flints-water-bill-subsidy-4-10-february/

2/15/2017

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 Granite State this week, *NH Journal* [looks](#) at whether or not the Republican-dominated State House may send abortion bills to the Governor's desk. They say that while the issue is not on the GOP House Speaker's agenda, some state Republicans have put forward bills which will restrict abortions after 21 weeks and repeal the "buffer zone law" which gives a 25-foot zone outside abortion clinics where protests are not allowed.

Moving on to Vermont, *VTDigger* [says](#) that both workers and businesses are split on raising the minimum wage; workers argue that higher wages will allow them to spend more locally, while businesses worry that paying workers more will mean higher prices. The state House Committee on General, Housing, and Military Affairs is currently considering two bills which would increase the Green Mountain State's minimum wage to \$15 an hour by either 2020 or 2022.

This week, New York's *State of Politics* has the [news](#) that Democratic Governor, Andrew Cuomo is reviewing a bill that would essentially turn New York into a "Sanctuary State" by preventing state and local police from working with federal law enforcement to enforce immigration laws. The bill apparently has little chance of passing in the state Senate, with the GOP Majority leader there stating the constitutionality of the proposal.

In Rhode Island this week, *RIFuture* [writes](#) that support for legalized cannabis has grown among state residents and the state legislature. A new poll shows that nearly 60 percent of Rhode Islanders support legalization, and majorities in both legislative chambers appear to be ready for a "tax and regulate" bill as well.

Save Jersey [bemoans](#) the fact that despite New Jersey's deepening fiscal crisis, the state's Treasury Department is seeking bids for addiction awareness advertisement, based on a budget of \$1 million.

In Pennsylvania this week, *Raging Chicken Press* [reports](#) that the state Senate has hypocritically voted to regulate the political spending of labor unions, but has left corporate political spending alone.

South

On Monday *Political Maryland* discusses the "elephant in the room" of GOP Governor, Larry Hogan. They [say](#) that while Hogan wants to project the image of being a bipartisan "nice guy", behind the scenes, he mocks his political critics and rarely works cooperatively with state Democrats.

Moving south to North Carolina, *NC Capitol Connection* [says](#) that a bill has been filed by a state GOP Representative which would permit Constitutional Carry – allowing people to carry a concealed handgun without a permit. Concealed carry already exists in the Tar Heel State, but this new bill would remove the financial and time burden of obtaining a permit.

Crossing state lines into South Carolina, *Fits News* [reports](#) that those who support the flying of the Confederate

flag buildings are pressing the issue by pushing for it to be displayed in a local museum, after it was removed from outside the State House in 2015.

On Tuesday, *Yellowhammer* [comments](#) that Alabama state Democrats' new bill to raise the state's minimum wage to \$10 an hour is a good intention, but a bad policy, given that some studies have shown increasing minimum wages may hurt low-skilled jobs as companies introduce greater automation in response.

Y'all Politics [has the news](#) that lawmakers in Mississippi have passed a bill which would add firing squads, electrocution to lethal injections as methods of execution in the state.

Heading west, *Arkansas Times* [says](#) that a bill introduced by a state Republican would make abortions using a certain procedure beyond the 12th week of pregnancy illegal and would also allow a husband or parents to seek an injunction to prevent the procedure. The law would make no exception for cases of rape or incest.

Midwest

On Wednesday, *Plunderbund* [comments](#) that Ohio's corporate media have "woken up" to Governor John Kasich's "alternative facts" about his job performance. They say that while Kasich has claimed that there are 400,000 more jobs in the state since the end of the Great Recession, tens of thousands of workers can't find jobs, because they aren't being created fast enough, meaning that they then drop out of the workforce.

In Michigan this week, *Eclecta Blog* [reports](#) that the state is going to stop subsidizing water bills in Flint, which has had an ongoing crisis of lead contamination in its drinking water. This means that Flint residents will again pay the highest water bills in the entire country.

Heading across Lake Michigan to Wisconsin, *Blogging Blue* [looks](#) at the state's need for its supply of rape kits to be tested by the state's Department of Justice – something that it had received federal funding to assist with the processing of. The state's Attorney General, Brad Schimel, has claimed that hundreds of rape kits have been tested, when in fact only nine of the 6,000 kits have been, potentially meaning that some rapes have gone unsolved. Staying in the Badger State, *The Political Environment* [writes](#) that with Governor Scott Walker's reelection looming in 2018, the GOP governor has signaled that he will be pivoting. Walker's new policies are likely to include more spending on education and rural broadband and some tax cuts for low-income workers, despite cutting similar programs earlier in his administrations.

Over in North Dakota this week, *Say Anything Blog* [says](#) that the medical marijuana initiative that won 64 percent of the vote in a state ballot last November was so "stupidly written" that it did not actually include language to decriminalize the use of medical marijuana. The state's legislature is now working on a bill which would include language to legalize the drug's medicinal use.

Dakota Free Press also talks drugs, [writing](#) Thursday that while state Representative Elizabeth May has changed her mind about reintroducing drug tests for those receiving food stamps, she is now cosponsoring a bill which would require those on welfare to "cooperate with the Division of Child Support".

West and Pacific

Montana Cowgirl this week [reports](#) on the "nutjob bills" that have been put forward by state Republicans for the 2017 legislative sessions. These include a new tax on electric vehicles, banning Sharia law from state courts, the creation of a state militia, and re-legalize the consumption of beer whilst riding in a car.

Heading west to Idaho, *Eye on Boise* has the [news](#) that the state's Republican Governor, Butch Otter, has sent a letter to President Trump offering his "hearty congratulations and sincere thanks" for his executive actions this far and his developing legislative agenda.

Heading south to New Mexico, *Politics with Joe Monahan* [says](#) that the first third of the current 60-day legislative session has been a good one for Governor Susana Martinez, with state Democrats having already capitulated on cutting public school funding and potentially even shortening the school year. Staying in the Land of Enchantment, *ProgressNow NM* [reports](#) that in the first state elections since Donald Trump became president – local school board elections – progressive candidates were able to fight off pro-Trump Tea Party candidates.

Moving on, *Blog for Arizona* has a [warning](#) for US Representative Martha McSally – she sits in a district that voted for Hillary Clinton last year. If she wants to win reelection next year, they say, then she will need to start listening to her constituents' concerns about Donald Trump's "ethical and constitutional over-reach".

Speaking of President Trump, the new president recently issued an order to defund so-called "sanctuary cities", of which San Francisco, California, is one. Trump also threatened to cut California's federal funding after the Democratic legislature took steps to essentially become a "sanctuary state". *Fox & Hounds* [looks](#) into whether or not the federal government can actually defund an entire state.

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