

Walker's out...and so is Boehner, the Pope comes to Washington DC, and how many aircraft carriers does the US need?: US national blog round up for 19 – 25 September

USAPP Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson** looks at the best in political blogging from around the Beltway. Our round-up of state blogs will follow over the weekend.

[Elections and the road to 2016](#)

[Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda](#)

[Foreign policy, defense and trade](#)

[Obamacare and health policy](#)

[The economy and society](#)

[And finally...](#)

President Obama, the Democratic Party, and the GOP

On Saturday, *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) that President Obama has nominated the first openly gay service secretary to head the army, Eric Fanning. They write that five or ten years ago the appointment would have created outrage from conservative politicians and pundits, while now, there has been next to zero negative response. What has upset some conservatives this week is the White House's guest list for the visit of Pope Francis. *Post Politics* [writes](#) that some commentators on the right have slammed the president for inviting people who they say are at odds with the Pope's position on same-sex marriage, abortion and homosexuality.

On Sunday, *American Thinker* [says](#) that under President Obama's tenure, drug enforcement law has lapsed, after states such as Colorado and Washington passed laws which have legalized marijuana in defiance of federal law.



Donald Trump Credit: Gage Skidmore (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Moving on to the Republican Party, *Townhall* [wonders](#) this week if billionaire presidential candidate, Donald Trump is turning the GOP into the 'know nothing' party, with his anti-immigration rhetoric. *Informed Comment* also [looks](#) at Trump's relationship with the Republican Party, writing that the GOP's decades of 'angry resentment' towards the left and the center has opened the door for someone like Trump to succeed by drawing on this anger.

This week also saw little progress in Congress to avoid a government shutdown which could begin on October 1st. *The Fix* [says](#) that Republicans might be okay with another shutdown given that they did not suffer an electoral penalty last November after shutting the government down in 2013.

Elections and the road to 2016

On Monday, *The Fix* [says](#) that super Political Action Committees ('super PACs') have changed the presidential primary very little, in light of former Texas Governor Rick Perry's exit from the GOP race last week. They [write](#) that if candidates are doing badly in the polls (as Perry was), then raising the 'hard money' needed to run their campaigns will prove difficult, despite having an associated super PAC.

The Fix this week [says](#) that it is time to end St. Louis's 'stranglehold' on presidential debates. They say that the Gateway to the West is the only city which has been home to a presidential or vice presidential debate twice, with four in total, and another to come next year.

Turning to the still-popular New York billionaire:

- *RedState* [says](#) that Donald Trump should not apologize for not correcting a man who stated that Muslims in the US were a problem during a campaign rally in New Hampshire last week.
- Do Republicans love Trump because he campaigns like a wrestler? (*PoliticusUSA*)
- Perhaps Trump's incoherence is his power (*The Fix*)
- Incoherence aside, Trump is showing his fighting ways 'by whining about every goddamn thing' (*Hit & Run*).
- Trump also wrote a letter this week to the conservative Club for Growth threatening it with a multimillion dollar lawsuit if it did not cease and desist running an ad that the Trump camp says is defamatory. (*The Fix*).

Moving on to the Republican primary race in general, *The Fix* [says](#) that Republicans are beginning to panic because of Donald Trump's appeal, which is making the party seem like it is very uncomfortable with the country's changing demographics, something that they write is an 'almost certain' election loser. *The Atlantic* meanwhile has been [tracking](#) the GOP primary's flubs, from Donald Trump's Islamophobia, to Rick Perry's confusion about clocks. *PoliticusUSA* [points out](#) on Saturday that the GOP's candidates who have actually held office seem to be unelectable in the Republican primary, given the popularity of Trump, ex-Hewlett Packard Executive, Carly Fiorina, and neurosurgeon, Ben Carson.



Wisconsin Governor, Scott Walker Credit: Chatham House (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

Looking at the individual candidates themselves this week:

- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker announced that he was dropping out of the race – *Sabato's Crystal Ball* [says](#) that he largely threw away the support of the GOP establishment and didn't have a firm enough grasp on many of the issues.
- *Hit & Run* has [three ways](#) that Walker's exit will change the GOP race.
- Walker's campaign was the 3rd shortest presidential run since 1972 (*Smart Politics*)
- Ben Carson this week stated that he did not believe the president of the US should be a Muslim – and may Americans agree with him (*The Fix*)...
- ...though not Texas Senator (and Presidential candidate) Ted Cruz (*Post Politics*).
- While Donald Trump still leads GOP primary polling, Carly Fiorina has moved up to second place, with 15 percent of the vote (*White House Dossier*)...
- ...though some wonder just how conservative Fiorina is (*Red State*).
- Former Florida Governor, Jeb Bush, has a plan to streamline federal regulation if he gains the White House (*Hit & Run*)...
- ...and also decried the US' status as a multicultural society (*Crooks & Liars*).
- Ohio Governor, John Kasich, may do well with Hispanics (*Red State*).

Moving on to the Democratic Party primary, *the Fix* this week [makes the case](#) for a greater number of Democratic debates; in 2008 there were 17 prior to the Iowa caucuses. Looking more closely at the candidates:

- Vermont Senator, Bernie Sanders refuses to consider being called 'socialist' an insult (*Informed Comment*).
- The media is actually not particularly biased against Sanders (*Monkey Cage*).
- Hillary Clinton vowed this week to put a cap on prescription drug prices if she is elected president (*Post Politics*)...
- ...and it turns out she also opposes the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline (*The Atlantic*).
- Clinton's email woes may be just about to get worse after the FBI recovered previously thought to be deleted emails from her server (*The Fix*).

Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda

On Wednesday, *Hit & Run* has the [news](#) that the recent hack of the data held by the Office of Personnel Management has got a great deal worse, now that we know that 5.6 million fingerprints records were stolen – far more than the 1.1 million that was originally reported.

As the government faces down the possibility of a shutdown from Thursday next week, *Federal Eye* [reminds](#) us that closing the government costs more than keeping it open. They say that 2013's shutdown cost over £2 billion, with 6.6 million days of work lost.



Speaker John Boehner welcomes Pope Francis of the Holy See to the United States Capitol. Credit: [Speaker Boehner](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-NC-2.0](#))

What a week in Congress! On Thursday, Pope Francis addressed the body, urging it to follow the ‘Golden Rule’, [writes Crooks & Liars](#). Friday sees the surprise announcement *from* House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-OH) that he would be resigning the speakership and his seat in October ([The Atlantic](#)). *The Left Coaster reckons* that Boehner’s resignation will mean he will do a deal with Democrats to avoid a shutdown, while *Outside the Beltway says* that the resignation comes after a difficult September for Boehner, with rumors that his position was under threat, and growing disquiet about his leadership from House conservatives.

Looking at the Senate more closely, *Hit & Run reports* that on Tuesday, a GOP measure to ban abortion after 20 weeks has failed to win enough support in the Senate to proceed, despite only two Republicans voting against it. *Daily Kos says* Thursday that a measure to defund Planned Parenthood had been similarly blocked in the Senate.

Foreign policy, defense and trade

On Wednesday, *Hit & Run looks* at how the US government has made ‘sexual rights’ part of its official human rights and global development platform. They say that it seems like a positive step in that it allows governments who are getting US humanitarian aid to use it more effectively.

This week also saw Chinese President Xi Jinping visit the US for meeting with business leaders and President Obama. *Wonkblog* has [seven simple questions and answers](#) to understand the China-US relationship, beginning with why China matters. *Hit & Run*, meanwhile, [says](#) that the Obama Administration is still figuring out its policy towards China with only 16 months left in office, after unsuccessful attempts at both partnership and confrontation.



Credit: [Official U.S. Navy Page](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-2.0](#))

The Hill's Congress blog [looks](#) at how many aircraft carriers the US needs, now that the Sixth Fleet is down to ten carriers.

Obamacare and health policy

On Saturday this week, *Daily Kos* [writes](#) that Obamacare's Medicare provision – which reduces reimbursements for hospitals with high admissions rates – is actually penalizing hospitals which take care of the sickest and the poorest.

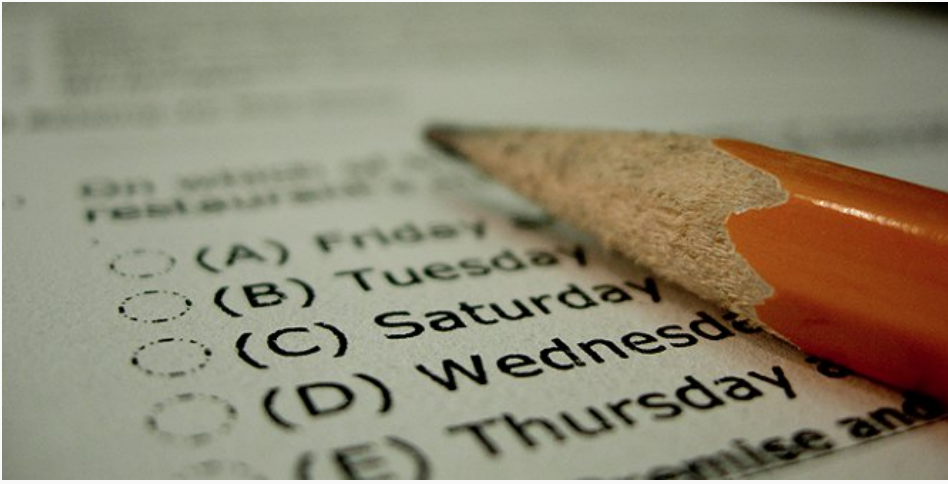
The Fix, also writing on Obamacare, [reports](#) that a new study has shown that the Affordable Care Act has made people more conservative about health care, with people being less supportive of health care spending across party lines.

The economy and society

On Saturday, *The Daily Signal* [writes](#) that the US spends far more on social welfare than most European nations, when private sector contributions are taken into account.

Earlier this year, many in the southern US were concerned that the Jade Helm 15 military training exercise was a cover for a pro-Obama coup. They can now rest easy – *Daily Kos* [says](#) that Jade Helm 15 is now finished.

On Monday, *Wonkblog* reports on [investigations](#) into what has happened to the children of the more than 500,000 parents who have been deported since 2009. They say the effects of losing a parent to deportation on children are similar to those that happen when a parent goes to prison. Also on immigration, *Monkey Cage* [says](#) that the real changes to immigration policy in the US are happening in the states, such as denying illegal immigrants tuition, or allowing them to be issued with drivers' licenses.



Credit: Ryan McGilchrist (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

The Atlantic [looks](#) at whether sending students to high school for longer will lead to better outcomes than the current focus on college.

Daily Kos [writes](#) this week that according to recent studies that show how the death penalty is selectively applied, the only way to receive it as a sentence is to kill a white person.

And finally...

Wonkblog [charts](#) the most popular type of home in every major US city.

The Fix has the [most honest ad](#) of the 2016 presidential campaign.

Featured image: House Speaker John Boehner Credit: [Gage Skidmore](#) (Flickr, CC -BY-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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