

Massachusetts' foreclosure law, Florida moves to repeal cohabitation ban, and does North Dakota need voter registration?: US state blog round up for 12 – 18 September

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

Northeast

On Thursday this week, *NH Labor News* [reports](#) that New Hampshire's Governor, Maggie Hassan has signed what they describe as a 'fiscally responsible, bipartisan budget agreement', but that some are concerned about cuts made to the state's public services, including that it does not include the reauthorization of the state's Health Protection Program which provides healthcare to 41,000 people in the state.

Heading down to the Bay State, *Blue Mass Group* [says](#) that the state's Senate was due this week to vote on proposed legislation which would 'bless the financial industry's illegal lending and foreclosures over the past 15 year'. They write that the new law would strip the titles of foreclosed properties from their owners (often the victims of subprime lending), so they can be re-bought.

On Friday, Rhode Island's *RI Future* [writes](#) that the state still has the highest poverty rate in New England, at 14.3 percent, and that African Americans in the state have a poverty rate of more than 20 percent.

Connecticut's *My Left Nutmeg* [writes](#) Wednesday that the state is offering up to \$52 million in tax credits, guarantees and loans for the world's largest hedge fund, Bridgewater Associates to renovate and expand its headquarters in the state. They say that the state is giving away millions of public funds at the same time as tens of thousands of families in the state are struggling to pay their property taxes due to the state's inadequate funding of public education.

In New York this week, *State of Politics* has the [news](#) that a new poll has found that there is broad demographic support for a gradual increase in the state's hourly minimum wage to \$15. They say that the poll results are likely to bolster the campaign of state Governor, Andrew Cuomo who wants New York's state legislature to adopt a higher minimum wage. *Ne Times Union* also [discusses](#) Governor Cuomo this week – reporting that he has downplayed a recent story that US Attorney Preet Bharara is looking into construction contracts for projects that are part of Cuomo's 'Buffalo Billion' efforts to revitalize the economy in the western part of New York state, after concerns were raised when Cuomo's campaign contributors won bids for construction projects.

South

On Tuesday, Kentucky's *Blue in the Bluegrass* [says](#) that the GOP's nominee in the state's upcoming gubernatorial election, Matt Bevin, has stated that he would like to do away with the state's Obamacare health insurance exchange and roll back the expansion of Medicaid in the



New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (Credit; Pat Arnow) CC- BY-SA-2.0)

state – something that they say will lead to the deaths of thousands of Kentuckians.

Moving over to North Carolina, *The Progressive Pulse* also [looks](#) at health care. They comment that the uninsured rate in the Old North State fell in 2014 due to federal health reforms, but by refusing to expand Medicaid, the state is still behind, and many more could have access to health insurance if Medicaid were to be expanded.

Did you know that cohabitation has been illegal in Florida for the past 147 years? *Saint Peters blog* has the [news](#) this week that the Sunshine State's House Criminal Justice Subcommittee has voted to approve a bill which would repeal the ban on couples living together before marriage. According to the law, the current penalty for cohabitation is a \$500 fine and up to 60 days in jail.

Heading over to the Yellowhammer State, *Left in Alabama* [says](#) that the state legislature has voted to remove \$1.2 million in funding from the state's Department of Environmental Management budget, leaving it with only \$280,000 to regulate factory farms in the state. They write that the move may end up meaning that the federal Environmental Protection Agency takes over some aspects of environmental monitoring in the state.

Continuing on to Oklahoma, *Blue Oklahoma* [writes](#) that the case of Richard Glossip's execution this week has created a huge 'image flop' for the Sooner State. They comment that the legal case against Glossip – who had a stay of execution this week to September 30th – is 'irrational'.

Burnt Orange Report this week [addresses](#) the case of Ahmed Mohamed a teenager from Irving, Texas who was arrested for bringing a homemade clock to school, which school officials thought might be a bomb. They say that we should not be surprised at Mohamed's arrest given Texas' 'history of Islamophobia'.

Midwest

On Sunday, Ohio's *Plunderbund* [says](#) that Democrats in the state have called for an independent investigation of GOP Governor John Kasich's 'chartergate' scandal, which involves the alleged illegal altering of data from an official state report in order to improve the rankings of some charter schools and sponsors by the husband of Kasich's presidential campaign manager, and former chief of staff.

Moving over to Michigan, *eclecta blog* has the [news](#) that both Cindy Gamrat and Todd Courser have filed to run for the November 3rd special elections triggered by their respective resignation and expulsion from the state House after their mutual affair was uncovered.

In the Prairie State this week, *Progress Illinois* [reports](#) that the administration of Governor Bruce Rauner has warned that one result of the current budget impasse may well be that health insurance payments could be stopped for state workers, retirees and university staffers.

On Friday, *The Political Environment* writes that the latest workforce numbers are both good and bad news for the state and its Republican Governor, Scott Walker. They [say](#) that while the Badger State still trails nationally in terms of the number of new jobs created, it has 'skyrocketed' to 30th among the states in new jobs, and that a breakthrough into the top 25 may not be far away.

Heading westwards, *Say Anything blog* [wonders](#) if North Dakota needs voter registration (it is the only state in the union which lacks it). They comment that there does not appear to be a huge amount of enthusiasm among state lawmakers for introducing voter registration, especially as it would be expensive and time-consuming to implement.

West and Pacific

On Wednesday, Colorado's *The Spot* [says](#) that the state was in the spotlight this week thanks to a question in GOP's primary debate because of a question on the legalization of marijuana. They say that the topic is sure to reemerge at the next debate on October 28th as it is taking place in Colorado – which has legalized the production and sale of the drug.

Blog for Arizona this week [examines](#) the success of supply-side economics in the Grand Canyon State, which

they say has been in place since the Great Recession began in 2007. They say that if there had been a 'trickle down' of wealth from the state's adoption of the policy, then it would have had a booming economy with full employment long ago, rather than lagging behind the rest of the country in recession recovery as it currently does.

In the Golden State this week, *Flash Report* [argues](#) that rather than being an economic benefit, California's pensions are a burden. They say that while the state's pensions systems pay out more than \$3 billion every month, and that this often goes to state businesses, this money still has to come from taxpayers who may have been able to spend it more effectively themselves.



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Heading on to Nevada, *Desert Beacon* [looks](#) at what they call the 'state's unfortunate export' – guns which are used for serious crime in other states. They say that gun trafficking in and out of the Silver State is made easier by a lack of restrictions on the sale of multiple guns and a lack of criminal penalties for selling a firearm to someone without having made a proper background check.

Idaho's *Eye on Boise* [reports](#) Friday that the state's prisons chief has temporarily halted all 'therapeutic community' programs in state prisons after an assessment found that offenders who go through these programs are actually more likely to offend than those that do not.

Hawaii's *Honolulu Civil Beat* [looks](#) at whether a new law really requires the state to have 100 percent renewable energy use by 2045. It turns out that it could actually allow up to 50 percent fossil fuel use after thirty years.

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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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