

## Clinton's bungled campaign reboot, Boehner in trouble, and shutdown threat looms again: US national blog round up for 5 – 11 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 on Saturday afternoon.

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### President Obama, the Democratic Party, and the GOP

On Tuesday this week, *Daily Kos* [reports](#) that President Obama has signed an executive order which will allow the 300,000 people working on federal contracts to earn up to 7 days sick leave from 2017. President Obama also made a renewed call for community college to be free for the first two years this week. *The Daily Signal* has [five caveats](#) for Obama's plan, including that community colleges' don't really work effectively any more, and that many low-income students already have access to federal grants to finance fees.



Credit: Michael Bentley (Flickr, CC-BY-2.0)

Moving on to the Democratic Party itself, on Monday *The Atlantic* [looks](#) at whether it will be able to retain its hold on black voters, with higher levels of economic well-being among blacks potentially pushing many towards the Republican Party.

Turning to the Republican Party, then, *RedState* [says](#) this week that the party is being haunted by the legacy of Chris McDaniel, a Mississippi Republican who lost a runoff primary against Senator Thad Cochran last year. They say that many activists who supported conservatives like McDaniel were 'burned' by the national GOP, and as a result have embraced the candidacy of Donald Trump. *The Atlantic* echoes this, [writing](#) that Trump's rise is partly down to the disappointment and disaffection that many who have supported the Republican Party in the past now feel.

Both Trump and Tea Party Senator Ted Cruz of Texas gathered with other conservatives on Wednesday to protest the Obama administration's deal with Iran over that country's nuclear program. *Roll Call's At the Races* [writes](#) that Trump and Cruz attacked Republican Congressional leaders, who said that they would take the blame if the Iran deal was not rejected by Congress.

## Elections and the road to 2016

On Sunday, *Hit & Run* has the [news](#) that Harvard Law Professor, Lawrence Lessig, has reached his goal of fundraising \$1 million, and will therefore be pursuing a White House run. If elected, Lessig plans to pursue campaign finance reform, and if successful, will resign in favor of his Vice President.

According to new polls, Donald Trump can't lose, and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton can't win, [says RedState](#), and that by criticizing Trump, the GOP risks throwing away a 'gimme election'. *FiveThirtyEight* meanwhile [says](#) that we should stop comparing Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. While they're both outsiders, Trump is winning by campaigning on his force of personality, while Sanders is not winning, and is focusing on substantive policy positions.

*Sabato's Crystal Ball* has a helpful [reminder](#) of when the filing deadlines for primaries and caucuses are – the first is South Carolina's on September 30.

Taking a closer look at the New York billionaire that is still very much at the center (and the top) of the GOP's presidential field:

- Apparently some liberals have started to love Donald Trump because of his support for higher taxes on the wealthy ([The Fix](#))
- Trump this week attacked rival GOP 2016 candidate, Carly Fiorina, accusing her of being unattractive ([RedState](#))
- He also trolled former Florida Governor, Jeb Bush, releasing an Instagram video of a woman sleeping during a Bush rally, and advising that Bush was a useful sleep aid ([The Fix](#)).
- Trump is apparently defying all 11 commandments of presidential politics ([Roll Call's At the Races](#))...
- ... and isn't playing by any set of rules ([The Fix](#)).
- Is Trump the hero that the GOP deserves rather than needs? ([Crooks & Liars](#)).
- This week Trump touted a poll that showed that he had the support of ¼ of black voters – *The Fix* [isn't so sure](#).
- Polling inaccuracies aside, Trump's surge is no-where near over yet ([Daily Kos](#))
- Though, his campaign is likely to teach us nothing ([Mischiefs of Faction](#)).

On Wednesday, *Roll Call's Rothenblog* gives a [significant reassessment](#) of the Republican primary race. They write that, until now, Iowa Republicans were likely to turn away from Donald Trump in their coming caucuses, as they would not see him as being presidential. With Trump's favorable ratings amongst Iowa Republicans now at 61 percent, this now seems unlikely. Turning to the rest of the GOP field:

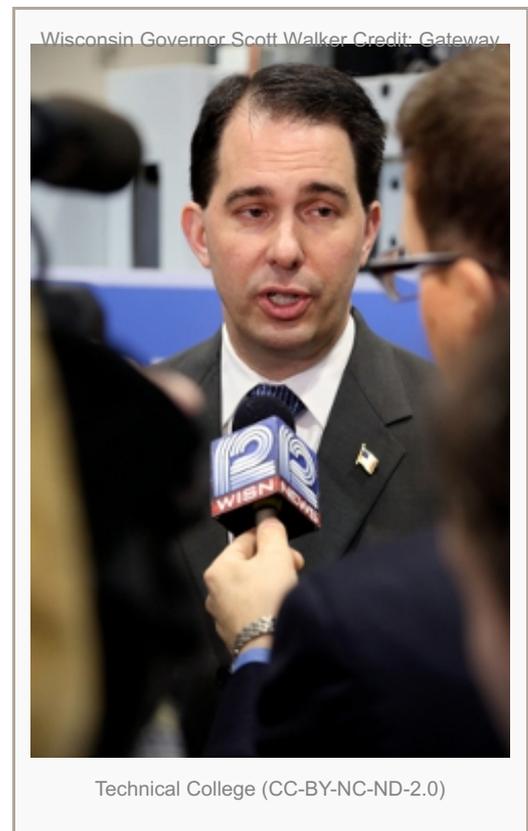
- Wisconsin Governor, Scott Walker claimed this week that his victories over the Badger State's unions saved state taxpayers \$4.7 billion – something that is untrue based on his own Congressional testimony from 2011 ([Crooks & Liars](#)).
- *RedState* [says](#) that it is no mystery why Walker's poll ratings are cratering – it's mostly down to his use of the Republican National Committee's consultants.
- Poll cratering or not, Walker would still like to 'wreak havoc' on Washington DC ([Post Politics](#)).
- Jeb Bush addressed his differences with his brother, George W. Bush on Stephen Colbert's first Late Show this week ([Wonkblog](#))...

- ..while he may have Trump to thank for his new plan to eliminate some tax breaks ([The Atlantic](#)).
- [Wonkblog](#) [reckons](#) that Jeb Bush's plans for \$3.4 billion in tax cuts are similar to those brought in by his brother in the 2000s.
- Despite nose-diving finances, former Texas Governor, Rick Perry's presidential campaign wants us to know that it's still alive ([Post Politics](#)).
- [Political Animal](#) [wonders](#) if Ben Carson is for real...
- ...while [Hit & Run](#) [says](#) that between Carson and Trump, there's not a great deal of room for former Arkansas Governor, Mick Huckabee's campaign.
- Louisiana Governor, Bobby Jindal launched a 'blistering' attack on Trump Thursday, accusing him of not being a serious candidate ([White House Dossier](#))

The Democrats' (smaller) field of potential 2016 candidates was also in the news this week:

- Hillary Clinton's favorability ratings are down – and it's not just because of her email problems ([Political Animal](#))...
- ...though she has now apologized for running her own private email server whilst Secretary of State ( [Post Politics](#)).
- This week saw Clinton attempt to reboot her campaign strategy – [The Atlantic](#) reckons that she [bungled it](#).
- Is criticism of Clinton underpinned by sexism? ( [Crooks & Liars](#)).
- Apparently Clinton wants to put employers in jail for wage theft ( [The Lonely Conservative](#)).
- She also unveiled some of her foreign policy positions this week – [The American Interest](#) [says](#) that they are to the right of Obama.
- **Polls now show Clinton behind Vermont Senator, Bernie Sanders in both New Hampshire and Iowa – is it time for her to start panicking? ([The Fix](#)).**
- [Townhall](#) [reckons](#) that Sanders is the Democrats' demagogue.
- If Vice President Joe Biden decides to run for president, it will hurt Clinton rather than Sanders ( [Monkey Cage](#)).
- Biden needs to make up his mind very soon about a presidential run, given his fundraising challenges and the need to qualify for the ballot in states with early filing deadlines ([The Fix](#)).
- [Hit & Run](#) [says](#) that Biden has entered 'campaign mode' with a Labor Day speech on the economy.

## Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda





House Speaker John Boehner Credit: Gage Skidmore (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

The House and Senate were back in town after their summer recess this week, with the Iran nuclear deal and the potential defunding of Planned Parenthood on the agenda of both. *RedState* writes Tuesday that House Speaker John Boehner's (OH) career is at an end, with it now looking unlikely that he will stand for the position again in 2017 as many in the House GOP caucus now do not support him. They say that Boehner has shown outright contempt for his fellow members of Congress who are conservatives, and that they in turn now hold him in contempt. *Mischiefs of Faction* says that Boehner could (and should) keep his job by making his opponents choose his successor. They say that Boehner could bring forth a special rule whereby a vote to replace him would be held, but that if no-one commanded the majority of the votes, the House would go back to normal business. This would exploit the relative disparateness of Boehner's conservative challengers.

On Wednesday, *The Atlantic* reports that Congressional Republicans have been maintaining that the shutdown that they are currently threatening will be different to previous shutdowns such as the one which took place in 2013. They say that conservatives in Congress are spoiling for a fight and believe that if they do not budge for long enough, then the Democrats will give in to their demands. *The Fix*, meanwhile has five scenarios that could prevent a lengthy shutdown from occurring from Tea Party Republicans backing down (unlikely), to Republicans teaming up with Democrats to pass a budget (possible).

The practically minded *Federal Eye* says that with a potential shutdown approaching, it is time for government agencies to dust off furlough plans. They say that in the 2013 shutdown, 800,000 of the 2.1 million non-postal Executive Branch employees were furloughed without pay.

The main news out of the Senate this week was the Democrats' successful filibuster of the vote against the Iran nuclear deal. *Outside the Beltway* says that things have not gone so smoothly in the House, with a vote for disapproval on the deal scheduled for Wednesday, but delayed by House conservatives.

### **Foreign policy, defense and trade**



Credit: David B. Gleason (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Recent weeks have seen the Chinese economy in difficulty, with slowing growth, a large market fall, and a devaluation of the renminbi by the People's Bank of China. *The Daily Signal* [writes](#) this week that the Pentagon keeps an eye on economic shocks such as this one; they say that a faltering China could lead to regional instability that spawns conflicts.

On Thursday, *American Thinker* [writes](#) on what they say is a way to defeat Iran and ISIS without committing ground troops in the region. They say that the US should encourage Turkey to support the formation of an independent Kurdistan out of a province of Iraq, and then arm the Kurds via Turkey against ISIS. To deal with Iran, they suggest scrambling the navigation and control modules of the country's nuclear warheads and missiles.

In the lead up to the success of President Obama's Iran deal in the Senate, there was a great deal of commentary and criticism from across the ideological spectrum. *Crooks & Liars* has the [news](#) that Colin Powell, Secretary of State under President George W. Bush, has come out in favor of the deal, and speculate that it is therefore only a matter of time until he is 'viciously attacked' by right wing blogs for his support. Also commenting on the Iran deal, *The Atlantic* [speculates](#) as to whether the next president (if Republican) would be able to repudiate the deal. They conclude that this is unlikely, given that the deal will bind the country in the same way that a treaty would.

### **Obamacare and health policy**

On Tuesday, *The Atlantic* [looks](#) at health-care mergers, after two plans were announced in July valued at \$88 billion and covering nearly 90 million people. They say that now that the Affordable Care Act has made it harder for companies to raise prices, health insurers are consolidating in order to seek more negotiating power.

*Wonkblog* [meanwhile](#) writes on how health insurance affects people's health. While research on the subject has many qualifiers, researchers agree that having access to insurance has benefits.

On Wednesday, *Talking Points Memo* [reports](#) that the House of Representative's lawsuit against Obamacare has been given a shot in the arm this week with a ruling by a federal judge in Washington DC that the body has standing to sue the Obama administration over whether or not it usurped Congress' spending powers.

### **The economy and society**

On Saturday, *Crooks & Liars* [says](#) that the new jobs report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics which shows that 173,000 jobs were created in August, and unemployment falling to 5.1 percent misses a more nuanced picture of employment in the US. They comment that in the wake of the Great Recession hourly wages have declined at every income level. *The Atlantic* [looks](#) at America's poorest, writing this week that they are getting virtually no assistance, with many surviving on cash incomes of no more than \$2 per day. Also writing on the theme of poverty, *The Lonely Conservative* [says](#) that the number of food stamp recipients in the US now outnumbers the population of Canada.

Are we witnessing the end of the SAT? *The American Interest* [says](#) that it's been a tough year for the test, with

colleges dropping the exam on the grounds that a test-optional regime would increase student diversity.

This week also saw the Kentucky clerk who had previously refused to grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples, Kim Davis, released from jail. *Outside the Beltway* [comments](#) that it may not be long before she's back in jail if she forces her clerks to stop issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

The US territory of Puerto Rico has experienced massive problems with outstanding debts in recent months. *Wonkblog* [looks](#) at how it might break its debt spiral and fix its broken economy.

**And finally...**

Why do Americans dress so casually? *Wonkblog* [investigates](#).

Which is better, Air Force One or Donald Trump's airplane? ( *The Fix* ).

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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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