

Brutal election for Maine liberals, North Carolina's aggrieved Governor, and Houston's equal rights ordinance fails: US state blog round up for 31 October – 6 November

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

Northeast

This week saw elections across much of the Northeast on Tuesday. *Pine Tree Politics* [reports](#) that election night was 'brutal' for Maine's liberal alliance, with a Portland ordinance to increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour losing by more than 15 points, and Republicans winning two special elections for the state's House of Representatives at the expense of the incumbent Democrats.

Heading down to the Granite State, *Miscellany Blue* [says](#) that this week a New Hampshire GOP lawmaker has embraced the Black Lives Matter movement, much to the chagrin of many of his Republican colleagues in the state legislature.

My Left Nutmeg [looks](#) at the 'terrible election cycle for progressives' in Connecticut. They write that the 'distinctly unprogressive' Democrat Joe Ganim was poised to reclaim the mayoralty of Bridgeport which he lost when he went to prison on corruption charges in 12 years ago, and predict that he will become a recurring headache for Democrats in the years to come.

Moving on to New York, *Capitol Confidential* has the [news](#) that one of the state's US House Representatives, Chris Gibson (R), has called for an investigation onto the closure of the Empire State's Obamacare co-operative insurance company, Health Republic Insurance of New York. The co-operative was funded by the federal government to the tune of \$250 million, but was ordered to be shut down in late September by state regulators as it faced insolvency.

Elections were also held for the New Jersey state Assembly this week – *PolitickerNJ* [writes](#) that local GOP candidates gathered on Monday to protest GOP Governor Chris Christie's appearance outside the Camden County Police Department's headquarters, claiming that he has not done his part to support their candidacies, and that he has been irresponsible in delegating Assembly fundraising to Lieutenant Governor, Kim Guadagno. Staying in the Garden State, *Save Jersey* [wonders](#) if off-year elections such as this year's help New Jersey Democrats, as well as the unions which assist them.

On Wednesday, *Raging Chicken Press* [looks](#) at what Tuesday's election means for Pennsylvania's future as a blue state. They say that Democrats swept three open state Supreme Court seats, turning the court to 5-2 in their favor.

This means that Democrats will have control of the state's bipartisan Legislative Reapportionment Commission, which will redraw the state's House and Senate, and US House maps.



New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie Credit: Gage Skidmore (CC-BY-SA-2.0)

South

In Kentucky this week, GOP gubernatorial candidate, Matt Bevin won a surprise victory against his Democratic rival Jack Conway. *Blue in the Bluegrass* [says](#) that Bevin has vowed to eliminate public education in the state, and to dismantle the state's Obamacare exchange, Kynect, by the end of next year.

Moving over to North Carolina, *The Progressive Pulse* [says](#) that the state's governor, Pat McCrory, is 'perpetually aggrieved', often complaining to the media that they don't 'understand the facts' behind a decision for which he is being criticized. Such decisions include a new anti-immigrant law, and his intervention on behalf of a prison contractor who was also a friend and campaign contributor.

In the Sunshine state this week, *Saint Peters blog* has the [news](#) that Florida Governor, Rick Scott, was expected to call for \$1 billion in tax cuts, mostly targeted at businesses. They say that Scott is recommending the large cuts despite signs that the state's GOP-controlled legislature will resist going along with it, setting up another contentious budget battle.

Arkansas Times [writes](#) Wednesday that the state's red tide is likely to continue. Commenting that with only 34 Democrats in the 100 member House, and 11 in the 35 member Senate, the Democrats are not likely to field enough candidates to win a majority next November.

Something Like the Truth of Louisiana [says](#) that Senator David Vitter, and GOP gubernatorial candidate ahead of the state's November 21st runoff election may now be a 'dead man walking'. They comment that this rather dramatic fall from grace may be down to the 'toxic' brand of the GOP's brand in Louisiana because of outgoing Governor Bobby Jindal, and that voters are disgusted with Washington insiders.

This week also saw a high-profile referendum on an equal rights ordinance, in Houston, Texas. *Burnt Orange Report* has the [news](#) that the measure has failed, meaning that equal rights in employment, housing, and public accommodation will not be protected in the city. They argue that Houston will suffer as a result, with companies likely to consider relocating, and that the 2017 Super Bowl may even possibly relocate.

Midwest

On Thursday, Michigan's *Eclecta Blog* [argues](#) that road repair plan passed by the state's legislature this week has been touted as raising over \$450 million in its first year will actually not do so until 2017, and that when that funding kicks in, another \$400 million will go away, meaning that there will not be a substantial increase until 2018.

Ogden on Politics [comments](#) that the failure of Houston's equal rights amendment (mentioned above), is a lesson for those in Indiana, as the state is considering similar legislation. They say that if such an ordinance failed in liberal Houston, it is unlikely to prevail in relatively conservative Indiana.

Moving up and over to North Dakota, *Say Anything blog* [argues](#) that Democrats are 'making hay' over \$100,000 bonuses given to five members of Governor Jack Dalrymple's staff. The comment that the budgets were paid out of existing budgets for state agencies, with no additional approval of appropriations.

This week also saw President Obama give the thumbs down to the Keystone XL oil pipeline which would run from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. *South Dakota War College* [reports](#) that Mount Rushmore State Representative, Kristi Noem, has stated that the pipeline's rejection will rob the state of jobs and economic opportunities.



Florida Governor Rick Scott Credit: Gage Skidmore (Flickr, CC-BY-SA-2.0)

West and Pacific

Montana Cowgirl blog has the [news](#) on Tuesday that Governor Steve Bullock has announced that the state will receive hundreds of millions in federal monies to insure 70,000 Montanans. They say that Bullock has worked with state Democrats and Republicans to come up with a bipartisan solution for people who earn less than \$16,000 a year, whose jobs were less likely to offer coverage.

Idaho's *Eye on Boise* also [discussed](#) Obamacare in the state, writing that for more than 86,000 Idahoans, health care reform has mean more affordable health coverage for just \$65 a month. They say that despite this positive change, nearly 80,000 Idahoans make too little to qualify for subsidized coverage, but too much for the state's Medicaid program.

Continuing west to Washington state, *Strange Bedfellows* [writes](#) that despite 135 mayors across the country supporting former US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton's presidential bid, the Mayor of Seattle, Ed Murray, does not.



On Saturday, *Blog for Arizona* [calls](#) the state's legislature a 'den of thieves'. They comment that a newly proposed school funding deal masks the continuing neglect of the state's education system, and that it has not provided a long-term sustainable cash flow to schools.

Fox & Hounds [reports](#) on what they say has been a busy weeks in California politics, from Assemblyman Marc Levine's idea to allow selfies of voters' ballots, to Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom's announcement that he would support an initiative to raise the minimum wage in the Golden State.

Heading out to the Aloha State, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [wonders](#) if those who have been evicted from public housing in the state should get a second chance.

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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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