

State of the States: Virginia's bellwether Circuit Court vote, Iowa Democrats in the wilderness, and is L.A.'s Garcetti in a dead-end job?: 4 – 10 March

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

Northeast

In Vermont this week, *VTDigger* [says](#) that following “Town Meeting Day” voters in the Green Mountain State have rejected 18 out of 209 school budgets. As enrolments continue to decline, Governor Phil Scott has been asking voters to reject such budgets in light of rising school spending.

Moving on to the Granite State, *NH Journal* [covers](#) a new state Senate bill which would allow those who were addicted to opioids to be involuntarily committed to the state's mental health service system. Staying in New Hampshire, *Granite Grok* [says](#) that keeping “men” out of the women's bathroom is a partisan issue, after the state House voted to kill a bill which would make it illegal to dismiss from any public or private accommodation that previously limited access to biological women.

In New Jersey this week, *Observer* [says](#) that state Democrats are preparing to challenge GOP Governor Chris Christie's new regulations which would make it easier for people to qualify for a gun carry permit. Staying in New Jersey, *Save Jersey* [reports](#) that state Assemblyman, Jack Ciattarelli has taken a swipe at his rival for the GOP gubernatorial nomination, Lieutenant Governor, Kim Guadagno, by demanding to know how much the state is spending on her security and travel expenses related to the election campaign.

South

On Wednesday, *Blue Virginia* takes a close [look](#) at the upcoming special election for Clerk of the Circuit Court serving Prince William County. While the contest might seem unimportant, it may be a bellwether for the state's general election this coming November.

The Progressive Pulse also [talks](#) judicial elections, reporting that the North Carolina state Senate has voted to make Superior and District Court elections partisan once again.

On Thursday, *GeorgiaPols* [previews](#) the upcoming special election in the Peach State's 6th US House District, commenting that given that 60,000 people in the district work in health care, Democrats should attach the GOP to the new health care bill, “with cement”.

Moving down to the Sunshine State, *Saint Peters Blog* has the [news](#) that the bill which requires a unanimous jury recommendation before the death penalty can be imposed has been sent to GOP Governor, Rick Scott. Republican lawmakers think that the jury bill is better than risking the abolition of the measure in the state.

In Mississippi, *Y'all Politics* [says](#) that Republican state Senator, Chris McDaniel, who challenged US Senator Thad Cochran in the 2014 midterm primary, is thinking about launching another bid next year. This time he would challenge incumbent GOP Senator, Roger Wicker.

This week *Arkansas Blog* [reports](#) that the state Senate has said goodbye to the Robert E. Lee holiday, which has until

now been observed on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The bill now moves to the state House, which would move the commemoration of the life of the Confederate General to October.

Midwest

On Thursday, *Howey Politics Indiana* [ponders](#) the future for South Bend's Democratic Mayor, Pete Buttigieg who recently dropped out of the race for chair of his party. They write that Buttigieg, who had been described as the "most dynamic candidate in the race", may be looking for a gubernatorial or towards a 2022 US Senate run.

Capitol Fax this week [reports](#) on a new poll which shows that Illinoisans think that the state government spends too much, and that it should address the current budget deficit via spending cuts and not tax increases. The current state Senate's "grand bargain" budget proposal is mostly made up of tax increases rather than spending reforms.

Moving north to the Badger State, *The Political Environment* [says](#) that the state's Governor, Scott Walker, has found a way to sell a \$1.2 billion highway project to lawmakers by not including an extra \$550 million for rebuilding an interchange.

On Thursday, *Blog for Iowa* [wonders](#) if state Democrats will find their way out of the "wilderness" after recent defeats in the state legislature and state-wide contests.

In the Mount Rushmore State, *Dakota Free Press* [reports](#) that the state's Senate has voted to repeal the requirement for people to have permits in order to carry a concealed weapon.

In North Dakota this week, *Say Anything Blog* [argues](#) that the state's universities require spending reform, not a bailout, after receiving nearly 17 percent increases from the state's general fund every two years for the past decade.

West and Pacific

On Thursday this week, *Progressnow NM* [says](#) that Governor Susana Martinez's recent comments that state Democratic leaders have been "wasting time" at the end of the current legislative session are "alternative facts", given that 175 pieces of legislation have passed in the first seven weeks of the two-month session.

Up in Montana, *Northern Broadcasting System* [writes](#) that the state's election administrators will struggle to prepare for a just announced special election for the state's at-large Congressman just before Memorial Day this year.

Heading over to Idaho, *Eye on Boise* [says](#) reports that a new bill to move school-board elections from May in off-numbered years to November in even numbered years has been targeted for multiple amendments in the state Senate, mostly concerning other electoral reforms such as vote-by-mail.

Talking of voting reforms, *Oregon Catalyst* this week [wants](#) to discuss the state's recent "motor voter" reform. They say that the new program, which automatically registers Oregonians to vote when they apply for a drivers' license, has been a boon to Democratic registration in the state.

Eric Garcetti this week won reelection as Mayor of Los Angeles by a considerable margin. *Fox & Hounds* [quashes](#) speculation that Garcetti might run for higher office by saying that "the mayoralty of L.A. is a dead-end job", with achieving statewide office a seeming impossibility.

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