

# State of the States: Florida legislature's war, Oklahoma's continuing earthquake crisis, and how Oregon can balance its budget: 25 February – 4 March

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 [blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2017/03/06/state-of-the-states-florida-legislatures-war-oklahomas-continuing-earthquake-crisis-and-how](http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2017/03/06/state-of-the-states-florida-legislatures-war-oklahomas-continuing-earthquake-crisis-and-how)

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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

On Thursday in the Green Mountain State, *VTDigger* [reports](#) that following a substantial debate, the state House has approved a bill which would shorten from three to ten years the time a crime remained on someone's record after they had finished their sentence.

Moving on to Rhode Island, *RI Future* [says](#) that a new study has found that undocumented immigrants pay more than \$31 million in state and local taxes, and that the state would gain more than \$6 million under comprehensive federal immigration reform.

In New York this week, *State of Politics* [talks](#) on comments from state Assembly Chairman Richard Gottfried this week on how the state might react to a repeal of the Affordable Care Act. Gottfried stated that if this were to happen, then New York "ought" to look at enacting a Medicare for all or single-payer system.

*PolitickerNJ* [looks](#) at the winners and losers in New Jersey politics this week, a week that saw Governor Chris Christie's give his final budget address. Staying in the Garden State, *Save Jersey* [wonders](#) if Christie is setting up his current Lieutenant Governor (and Secretary of State), Kim Guadagno up for failure in her bid to replace him after she criticized his \$300 million State House renovation project, to which he responded by kicking her out of her offices mere days before nominating petitions are due to be received.

In the Keystone State, *Politics PA* [reports](#) that state Senate Democrats have fallen victim to a ransomware cyberattack.

## South

On Wednesday, *Bearing Drift* has the [news](#) that the US Supreme Court has ruled on Virginia's House of Delegates' redistricting plan which saw 12 House districts challenged as having been drawn unfairly. The Court did not rule that the districts were unconstitutional; rather it sent the case back to a lower court for a new ruling.

Heading down to South Carolina, *FITS News* [writes](#) that the state's Election Commission is looking to upgrade the state's voting system, a program which would cost around \$40-50 million. They say that the requested appropriation is unlikely to be included in the current state budget, an omission which could have real consequences to the integrity of elections in the Palmetto State.

In the Sunshine State this week, *Saint Peters Blog* [comments](#) that the state Legislature is now in a state of "open war" with the state Supreme Court over revisions to "stand your ground" and death penalty laws. In response to the Court's rulings, the legislature has put forward bills which would impose 12-year term limits on justices and would require them to file reports to the governor and legislature on the timeliness of their decisions.

Heading up to Alabama, *Yellowhammer* [writes](#) that the de-facto adoption of Common Core Standards in the state

has led to huge learning gaps since they were introduced in 2010.

On Thursday, *Arkansas Blog* [says](#) that a state Representative has introduced a bill which would make it impossible for individuals to change the sex which is listed on their birth certificate. The bill would mandate that intersex people should “pick” a sex by their fifth birthday and then stick with it.

*Blue Oklahoma* this week [writes](#) that the state is still facing a major earthquake crisis, likely due to fracking, despite a fall in their number in the past year.

## Midwest

On Thursday, *Blogging Blue* of Indiana [says](#) that it really should not come as a surprise that former Governor, and now Vice-President, Mike Pence used a personal account for Indiana State Business. Pence had fiercely criticized Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential election campaign for running her own private email server whilst Secretary of State. *Howey Politics Indiana* also [assesses](#) Pence’s legacy, commenting that while the economy thrived under his tenure, he became one of the most polarizing governors in modern times.

Heading down to Missouri, *Show Me Progress* [reports](#) that the state’s Supreme Court has ruled that the city of St. Louis is able to have a higher minimum wage than the rest of the state.

On Tuesday, *Blog for Iowa* [implores](#) readers to stop the state GOP’s “dirty dozen”; bills which would make the state worse off, such as attacks on teachers’ rights and benefits, and mid-year budget cuts that would close prisons and courts.

Moving on to South Dakota, *Dakota Free Press* [says](#) that the state House has sent approved a Senate bill which would allow state-funded child placement agencies to discriminate against children and prospective parents based on their religious beliefs. They comment that the bill will lead to many LGBTQ families being turned away.

*Say Anything* this week [writes](#) that Governor Doug Burgum has called for state leaders to reinvent the way that the state delivers services. They comment that the state’s constitution and “rank political parochialism” are going to be major obstacles to this change.

## West and Pacific

On Tuesday, *New Mexico Politics with Joe Monahan* [wonders](#) if the state is ready for an openly gay governor, as Santa Fe Mayor, Javier Gonzalez appears to be testing the waters for a gubernatorial bid next year.

Heading up to Wyoming, *WyoFile* [reports](#) that the state’s congressional delegation has been given applause in a recent visit to the state legislature but has faced harsh criticism from constituents at local town hall events.

In Idaho, *Eye on Boise* [says](#) that bills which would limit civil asset forfeiture in the state, and would charge heroin dealers with murder should their clients die have survived a lengthy hearing in the state House Judiciary Committee, and are now on their way to a vote in the full House.

On Monday, *Oregon Catalyst* [writes](#) on how state legislators can balance Oregon’s budget, but without raising taxes. Measures include opting out of Obamacare’s Medicaid expansion, reforming the state’s public pension system, and a state employee hiring freeze.

*Flashreport* this week [says](#) that California State Senator, Janet Nguyen was removed from the Senate for challenging the memorial to the late Senator Tom Hayden, a Democrat with communist sympathies. Nguyen – whose family escaped communist Vietnam – had planned to make a statement about Hayden’s pro-Viet Cong stance.

Heading out to Hawaii, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [says](#) that state lawmakers have advanced a bill which would restrict the use of prolonged segregated confinement in the Aloha State's prisons and jails.

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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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