

State of the States for 29 September: Murphy’s New Jersey spending plans, how Moore won in Alabama, and does California polarize America?

USAPP Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson**, looks at the week in US state blogging.

Northeast

On Tuesday this week, *PoliticsPA* [reports](#) that State Senator Scott Wagner – who plans to run for Pennsylvania Governor – has had a nod of approval from former Trump advisor, Steve Bannon.

Heading south to New York, *State of Politics* [writes](#) that a new study from state Comptroller Tom DiNapoli has found that 27 local governments in the state are under fiscal stress. Staying in the Empire State, *Capitol Confidential* [says](#) that following a federal appeals court’s decision to vacate the convictions for corruption of former state Senate Majority Leader, Dean Skelos, Governor Andrew Cuomo has stated that fighting government corruption “is right”, but also that it must be done “legally”. The corruption case against Skelos was overturned after the jury instructions at his original trial were deemed to be improper following a US Supreme Court decision.

Moving on to the Garden State, *Save Jersey* [argues](#) that the spending plans of the leading candidate in the state’s gubernatorial race – Democrat Phil Murphy – would require the tolls levied by previous (and one-term) Democratic Governor, Jon Corzine. *Blue Jersey*, meanwhile [wonders](#) how Murphy, who is running largely as an outsider, will navigate the “power players” in the state’s Democratic establishment.

South

Virginia’s *Bearing Drift* this week [reports](#) that a new poll shows Democrat Ralph Northam now leads Republican Ed Gillespie by 6 percentage points in the Old Dominion State’s gubernatorial race. Voters go to the polls in Virginia on November 7th.

On Thursday, *The Progressive Pulse* of North Carolina has the [news](#) that the state’s Supreme Court has sent one of its oldest racial gerrymandering cases back to trial court – after it had previously been punted back down by the US Supreme Court. The case began with claims that the state’s 2011 legislature had drawn its congressional and state legislative district maps in a way than racially gerrymandered districts and disregarded traditional redistricting principles.

In the Peach State, *GeorgiaPol* [says](#) that a state Republican and a former state Democrats have presented a bipartisan compromise which would empower local governments to sell Confederate monuments in their area or to give them to the city of Stone Mountain for safe keeping. The deal comes after the two publically went head-to-head over Confederate memorials in August.

This week, *SaintPetersblog* [comments](#) that Florida’s US Senator, Bill Nelson is in hot water with his Republican opponents for tacking on a contribution request in an email about Hurricane Irma.

Alabama made national news this week with Roy Moore beating out the incumbent GOP Senator Luther Strange in the GOP runoff fight ahead of the election for the state’s US Senate seat in December. *Yellowhammer* [writes](#) that Moore won because of turnout from a “highly motivated populist base”. They say that Moore’s campaign was able to connect with the country’s new populist movement and to tie Strange to the establishment.

On Friday, *Something Like the Truth* of Louisiana [argues](#) that providing the oil industry with billions in corporate welfare is not the state’s “patriotic duty”, writing that the exemptions to state taxes for oil and gas interests are not justified given the relatively low number of permanent jobs promised by the companies in return.

Continuing on to the Lone Star State, *Big Jolly Politics* [says](#) that the Texas Republican Party now wants anyone who owns a gun in the state to be able to carry a firearm, both concealed and unconcealed, with no permit required.

Midwest

On Tuesday, *eclecta blog* [writes](#) on the Democratic candidate for Michigan’s 8th Congressional District, Elissa Slotkin, who they say is showing those in her party how to run a successful Congressional campaign.

Moving on to Indiana, *Indy Politics* [says](#) that there is a new voting battle in the state’s Marion County. The county is being sued by advocates who argue that its lack of early satellite voting, which other counties have, disenfranchises voters.

Illinois’ *Capitol Fax* [reports](#) on Thursday that the state House Republican Floor Leader, Peter Breen, has stated that he “can no longer support” Governor Bruce Rauner, following Rauner’s signing of House Bill 40, which provides taxpayer funding for abortions.

On Monday, *Dakota Free Press* [says](#) that South Dakota Governor, Dennis Daugaard, while supporting the repeal of Obamacare and the reduction of Medicaid in his state to safeguard the federal budget is still happy for the state to receive nearly \$26 million in funding from the Federal Highway Administration.

Talking of federal funding, *Say Anything blog* [wonders](#) if the expansion of Medicaid in North Dakota helped to contribute to the state’s opioid crisis, after new studies found that Medicaid patients were more likely to be prescribed opioids compared to those who had private insurance.

West and Pacific

On Thursday, *Colorado Peak Politics* [reports](#) that leftwing “Indivisible” groups in the state are taking up arms and are forming their own “pseudo militias”. They say that the move is a strange turn for the Democratic Party given their opposition to assault rifles in 2013.

In Wyoming this week, *WyoFile* [wonders](#) who killed criminal justice reform in the state, after House Bill 94 – which was designed to curb the state’s rising prison population – died without a vote “in the desk drawer of the senate president.

Eye on Boise, meanwhile, [examines](#) proposals that would see public employees switch to a self-insurance health insurance model, which could save state taxpayers as much as \$13 million in the first year if the plan was to be implemented.

Moving on to the Golden State, *Fox & Hounds* this week [wonders](#) if California is polarizing America by acting as a Democratic monolith, thus cancelling out the South, and preventing the GOP from achieving stable governing majorities. Staying in California, *Calbuzz* [says](#) that despite a recent poll which shows that many of those in the state are not keen for the state’s senior US Senator, Dianne Feinstein to run again, nothing in the poll numbers suggest that she could be beaten.

Heading out to Hawaii, *Honolulu Civil Beat* has the [news](#) that a state agency has proposed tripling fees for accessing public records.

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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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