

State of the States for 22 September: Christie’s \$240m opioid plan, #NukeGate in South Carolina, and Michigan passes “Citizens United on Steroids”

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

Northeast

On Tuesday, New Hampshire’s *Granite Grok* [revisits](#) the “flap” over the apparent attempt by a high school in the state to ban the American flag at one of its pep rallies.

In 2014 the Green Mountain state tried and failed to implement a single-payer healthcare plan. The state’s Independent Senator, Bernie Sanders, has recently been touting a similar plan at the federal level. *VTDigger* [says](#) that Vermont’s former Governor, Peter Shumlin has argued that single-payer is better implemented at the federal level, also commenting that small states can’t implement the plan on their own, citing the rising costs that scuppered his plan three years ago.

Moving on to Rhode Island, *RI Future* [reports](#) that the state’s Governor, Gina Raimondo, has secured funding via donors to cover every recipient of DACA that is eligible to renew their application prior to the deadline on October 5th.

In New York this week, *Capitol Confidential* [writes](#) that the state’s now unified Republican Party is waiting for a candidate for the state’s 2018 gubernatorial election to put their name forward.

New Jersey faces a gubernatorial election this year; *Blue Jersey* takes a [look](#) at where the candidates, Republican Lieutenant Governor, Kim Guadagno and Democrat, Phil Murphy, stand on issues from the minimum wage, marijuana legalization and gun background checks. Staying in the Garden State, *State of Affairs* has the [news](#) that Governor Chris Christie has unveiled a \$240 million plan to tackle opioid addiction in the state.

South

Political Maryland this week [writes](#) on how Governor Larry Hogan is attempting to “sabotage his own education commission”. They say that Hogan has written a “scathing” letter to Education Secretary Betsy DeVos denouncing the state’s school improvement program, despite the panel being drawn up of mostly his own appointees.

Moving on to Virginia, *Bearing Drift* [reports](#) that a new poll shows that the Democratic candidate in the Governor’s race, Ralph Northam is on 44 percent while his GOP opponent is on 43 percent; the close race will come down to turnout.

In South Carolina, *FITS News* has the [latest](#) on #NukeGate, the failed intervention by the state’s government into the energy sector. State-run utility Santee Cooper patterned with a private sector firm to build two nuclear reactors, but Santee Cooper pulled the plug on the deal at the end of July, at a cost that may run into the billions as well as meaning an estimated 5,600 job losses.

SaintPeters [blog](#) [says](#) that the Florida’s Legislative Black Caucus has accused Governor Rick Scott of suppressing the vote in a special Senate District election, arguing that many in the districts African American communities were still struggling to recover from the effects of Hurricane Irma.

Yellowhammer of Alabama [says](#) that former Trump aide, Sebastian Gorka will be heading to the state to stump for US Senate Candidate (and former Chief Justice) Roy Moore in the state’s [GOP runoff election](#), scheduled for next week.

Meanwhile, *Arkansas Times* [informs us](#) that a circuit judge in the state has ruled in favor of a Freedom of Information act lawsuit, meaning that the state must disclose the labels on the drugs it has obtained to carry out executions.

On Tuesday, *Big Jolly Politics* [wonders](#) if Republican Speaker Joe Straus is the most courageous politician in Texas, after Straus wrote on Facebook that the Children of the Confederacy Creed plaque in the state Capitol was not accurate because it states that the Civil War was not an act of rebellion and was not primarily about slavery.

Midwest

This week Ohio’s *Plunderbund* [writes](#) that the state’s Republican Party is looking to freeze Medicaid in the state by overriding Governor John Kasich’s veto in June which protected the program’s expansion.

Continuing on to Michigan, *eclecta blog* says that [state](#) Republicans have passed two Senate bills – which they dub “*Citizens United on Steroids*” which would allow for unlimited donations to political Super PACs, and allow donors to keep their gifts secret. Staying in Michigan, *Right MI* [reviews](#) each of the expected GOP candidates for Governor. Topping the list is the current Attorney General, Bill Schuette.

Over in the Hoosier State, in a new podcast *Indy Politics* [says](#) that the state is at the heart of the national debate over tax and education reform.

In Illinois, *Capitol Fax* [reports](#) that the state’s GOP Governor, Bruce Rauner is now “undecided” on whether he will sign House Bill 40, which expands the public funding of abortions to Medicaid recipients, as well as preserving the procedure’s legality should the Supreme Court strike down *Roe v. Wade*.

[According](#) to *Dakota Free Press* the state’s minimum wage will rise by 20 cents to \$8.85 an hour from 2018, the biggest jump since 2014.

West and Pacific

On Thursday, *Colorado PeakPolitics* [says](#) that US representative Ed Perlmutter hasn’t staged a public town hall in nine years, rather preferring telephone town halls to public meetings.

Heading on to New Mexico, *ProgressnowNM* has the [news](#) that Governor Susana Martinez has been accused of using her office to help private companies which made large donations to her campaign to secure investment details from state agencies. If true, such deals would violate federal Securities Exchange Commission rules.

Reptile Dysfunction talks Montana’s state budget crisis on Tuesday, [commenting](#) that state legislators on both sides of the aisle were playing “chicken” with people’s lives by waiting until it became apparent that state revenues would fall short, and now having to make budget cuts which may affect vulnerable groups.

Oregon Catalyst [writes](#) that the state’s new \$0.10 per gallon gas tax, is the 5th highest in the nation. The new tax is part of a total package of hikes, fees and taxed valued at \$530 million.

In the Golden State, *Fox & Hounds* [says](#) that the conclusion of the California legislature’s 2017-18 session has left challenges for small businesses in the form of new taxes, mandates and regulations.

On Monday, *Honolulu Civil Beat* has the [news](#) that the estimated cost of Honolulu’s planned 20-mile rail system has now dropped by \$1 billion to \$9 billion.

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- *Featured image, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, Credit: [Gage Skidmore](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-SA-2.0](#))*

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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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