

# State of the States for 8 September: Vermont’s new marijuana panel, South Dakota purges voter rolls, and making sense of Montana’s budget.

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

## Northeast

This week in Maine, *Pinetree Politics* [argues](#) that the city of Portland is actively hostile to growth, with the city imposing large regulatory burdens on to its business community and looking to institute more in the form of policies such as mandatory paid sick leave and higher property taxes.

Moving on to the Green Mountain State, *VT Digger* [writes](#) that Governor Phil Scott has created a 13 member panel to examine the legalization of marijuana in Vermont. Up to now, marijuana legalization has failed several times in the state with various bills stalling in the state House or being vetoed by the Governor in recent years.

In New York this week, *State of Politics* [comments](#) that the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) has seized on a new poll which has found President Trump’s approval ratings to be slumping upstate. They say that the DCCC is looking to mount challenges to several incumbent Republican representatives next year, something may have just become easier given the poll results. Staying in New York, *Times Union* [reports](#) on another poll – this time it has found that a majority of Empire Staters believe that Confederate monuments should remain in place as part of the “country’s history”.

This year sees an off-year gubernatorial election in New Jersey; *Observer* has a [look](#) at the slate of candidates on both sides of the aisle including current Lieutenant Governor, and Republican, Kim Guadagno, and Democrat Phil Murphy. *Save Jersey* meanwhile [comments](#) that it is another sad day for New Jersey politics as the corruption trial of US Senator Bob Menendez began.

## South

On Thursday, *Blue Virginia* [reminds us](#) that since 2001, only seven incumbents in the state’s House of Delegate have lost their seats, and wonders if this year’s election will be any different.

Moving on to North Carolina, *The Progressive Pulse* has the [news](#) that the state’s General Assembly is about to spend \$150,000 on a study of the state’s wind industry which has essentially already been conducted by the US Department of Defense and other federal agencies.

Heading down to South Carolina, *FITS News* [reports](#) that there has been an “abysmal turnout” for the primary elections for the state’s 113<sup>th</sup> House District. It turns out that of the 24,715 registered voters in the district, only 1,251 votes were cast.

*Yellowhammer* [writes](#) Friday that candidates in the state’s Lieutenant Governor’s GOP primary race are making waves with big donations across the entire field.

*Y’all Politics* of Mississippi has a [proposal](#) for state Republicans – that they should “lead the charge” to drop the Confederate Battle Flag from the state’s flag. They argue that the flag is highly polarizing, despite being a symbol which the entire state should be “proud to rally” around.

*Juanita Jean’s* of Texas [says](#) that as of this week, you can in fact bring a knife to a gun fight in the Lone Star State, after a law came into effect that Texans could open carry blades longer than 5.5 inches – a length which means swords are included as well.

## Midwest

*Plunderbund* of Ohio this week [comments](#) that the state’s Republican Governor, John Kasich has been flip flopping on immigrants – first saying in 2015 that Syrian refugees were not welcome in his state, and now inviting DREAMers to come there.

Michigan’s *eclecta blog* [writes](#) Monday that if local governments in the state do not take measures to increase their tax take in order to pay for promised retiree benefits, then they may face dissolution by the state government.

In Illinois, *Capitol Fax* [points out](#) that the state’s Republican Governor, Bruce Rauner has not been entirely truthful about his own grandfather on his mother’s side. Rauner recently stated that his grandfather was a Swedish immigrant, but US Census records show that neither of his maternal grandparents were immigrants.

Moving on to the Badger State, *The Political Environment* [says](#) that GOP Governor Scott Walker’s “war on wages” is continuing, with Walker soon likely to sign into law a spending plan which will cut blue-collar “prevailing wages” paid on state road-building projects.

*Blog for Iowa* this week [reckons](#) that state Republicans know that they are able to get away with anything – the right wing media give them cover when they propose measures like cutting Medicaid by eliminating retroactive payments for new enrollees as Governor Kim Reynolds has recently done.

On Sunday *Dakota Free Press* has the [news](#) that in the month of August the Secretary of State purged more than 2 percent of voters from the state’s voter registration lists, a purge that they say hit more Democrats than Republicans.

## West and Pacific

*Colorado Peak Politics* this week [reckons](#) that a coalition which wants to redistrict the state to make it less partisan actually wants to do the exact opposite, and stack the electoral system in the state for the Democrats.

Moving on, *Montana Cowgirl Blog* this week [attempts](#) to make sense of the state legislature’s shortfalls in the current budget session despite the state experiencing high wage growth and record lows in unemployment. They say that the state is now faced with cutting 10 percent across all government programs because the executive branch is unable to increase revenues without the approval of the legislature. Staying in the Treasure State, *The Montana Post* [says](#) that as the state experiences large wildfires, its representatives in the US Congress are working with President Trump to slash the budget for disaster relief agencies in order to give tax breaks to “billionaires and corporations”.

Idaho’s *Eye on Boise* this week has the [news](#) that the state has paid \$3.5 million to the Federal Communications Commission as part of a settlement after the state’s contract, issued to two politically connected vendors, for a broadband network linking every high school was declared illegal.

In the Golden State, *Flashreport* [implores](#) conservatives in California to be “more bullish” about the future of the state in order to help themselves to get elected rather than stating that it’s terrible. *Fox & Hounds* also [talks](#) California elections, reporting on comments from state senator, Anthony Portantino, who has recently put forward the idea that local races should be placed at the top of the ballot so that voters pay more attention to them.

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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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