

State of the States for 1 September: Christie’s approval hits new lows, Indiana’s online tax grab, and California’s new political rivalry

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

Northeast

In recent weeks, in the wake of controversy over the removal of Confederate monuments in the South some American towns and cities elsewhere have begun to reconsider the legacy of Christopher Columbus. Maine’s *Pine Tree Politics* [reports](#) that the City Council of Bangor has determined that Columbus Day – 9 October – should instead be Indigenous Peoples’ Day. They argue that while there is “nothing wrong” with celebrating and recognising indigenous people through a holiday it is “absurd” to wash away figures in world history like Columbus.

Heading south to the Green Mountain state, *VT Digger* [says](#) the economic message of GOP Governor Phil Scott, which includes opposition to higher minimum wages and undermining unions, is not connecting with reality in the state. They say that the state’s economy is not doing too badly, meaning that Scott’s “cookie cutter” economic development models aren’t needed.

On Wednesday, *RI Future* has the [news](#) that the state’s Governor, Gina Raimondo has signed into law a bill which bans conversion therapy for minors.

In the Empire State this week, *Capitol Confidential* [writes](#) that a company whose officials donated to New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (and received \$25 million in state grants for existing projects) was allowed by state insurance regulators to increase prices of its healthcare plans. They state that a spokesperson for Cuomo has denied the donations had any impact on his administration’s policies.

New Jersey’s *State of Affairs* [reports](#) that the state’s Lieutenant Governor, Kim Guadagno – who is also running for governor – has repeatedly declined to comment on a state Assemblyman who posed for a picture in front of a Confederate flag. Staying in the Garden State, *Save Jersey* [says](#) that Governor Chris Christie’s approval rating has dropped to 16 percent, even lower than that of the state’s US Senator, Bob Menendez, who is about to begin a federal corruption trial.

South

On Monday, *Political Maryland* [comments](#) that there’s a “little bit” of Donald Trump in the state’s Governor, Larry Hogan, who, as well as lecturing judicial leaders in Baltimore, has also recently pushed a ‘fake news’ story concerning a ‘phantom’ movement to sack the state flag.

Heading south to Virginia, *Bearing Drift* [calls](#) out a member of the GOP’s State Central Committee after he made a racist rant on Facebook, calling the statement “filth and bigotry”, and stating that there should be no place for him in their party.

North Carolina’s *The Progressive Pulse* [argues](#) this week that it is critical that the state’s Supreme Court invalidates the legislature’s bid to take away Governor Roy Cooper’s constitutional power to appoint election board members. The legislature’s attempt is another attempt to undermine the Democratic governor and to gain more power.

FITS News [writes](#) this week on the special election for South Carolina State House District 113; with only one week to go before the Democratic primary, a DUI arrest record for one of the three contenders has surfaced, making this the second such charge among the candidates which has come to light in this race.

In the Peach State, *Better Georgia* [writes](#) that a white state representative has threatened a former black colleague over the latter's comments about the removal of Confederate memorials.

Florida's *The Shark Tank* [looks ahead](#) to the 2018 gubernatorial race, wondering who the most conservative is of all of the announced Republican candidates. They conclude that the winner may well be Representative Ron DeSantis, who is perceived as being the most conservative according to a recent poll.

Midwest

In Michigan, *eclecta blog* [says](#) that the failure of emergency management in the state has been proven once again, as in the past month, the disinfecting equipment which dispenses chlorinates to Flint's drinking water supply ran dry, meaning that untreated water was distributed to those in the city.

Indy Politics [writes](#) Monday that the state of Indiana is heading to court to collect more online taxes from out-of-state merchants. The suit asks a court to find a new state law which requires out of state businesses to collect and remit the same sale taxes as local businesses, constitutional.

Moving on to Illinois, *Capitol Fax* [says](#) that GOP Governor Bruce Rauner has been arguing that the state's General Assembly Speaker, Michael Madigan, has been successful at forcing the Assembly to pass a tax hike with no reforms. They say that despite Rauner playing the victim, the Assembly has in fact passed some bills that contained what he wanted, such as pension and procurement reform.

On Sunday, *Blogging Blue* of Wisconsin [reminds](#) us that Representative (and US House Speaker) Paul Ryan has still not had a 'real' town hall meeting. Ryan instead apparently prefers 'controlled' CNN town hall meetings where media attendance is limited.

Over in North Dakota, *Say Anything* [wonders](#) if the state needs a law to protect the full-time jobs of those serving in the legislature. They comment that in South Dakota, legislators are protected by a law which requires employers to give a temporary leave of absence to an employee so that they can perform their legislative duties.

West and Pacific

Montana Cowgirl [writes](#) that in 2017, the state's Republicans have been cowards, crooks, and carpetbaggers.

Colorado Peak Politics this week [says](#) that after being a 'political tease', Governor John Hickenlooper is trying to dampen speculation that he may mount an independent White House bid on Republican John Kasich's ticket in 2020.

Moving on, *Blog for Arizona* [argues](#) that the state's 'lawless TeaPublican' legislature is seeking to avoid accountability for not adequately funding school districts by asking the courts to dismiss a lawsuit challenging their school finance scheme.

Over in the Golden State, *Fox & Hounds* [wonders](#) if California politics has a new top rivalry in the form of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and US Senator Kamala Harris, who may be two potential Democratic contenders for the party's 2020 presidential nomination.

On Monday, *Oregon Catalyst* [reports](#) that the state is taking a big step to battle opioid abuses by making it easier for friends and family members to administer an overdose drug if needed.

Featured [image](#): New Jersey Governor Chris Christie. Credit: [Marc Nozell](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-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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