

State of the States for 13 October: Vermont syringe exchanges’ success, Florida’s slavery memorial plans and Missouri’s ‘cartoon Trump’

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

Northeast

The big news out of the Pine Tree State this week is that Susan Collins will stay in the US Senate rather than running for Governor, [writes Dirigo Blue](#).

Heading down to Vermont, [VTDigger looks](#) at how the state’s introduction of a syringe exchange program this year has helped to reduce the number of deaths from opioid overdoses.

[Granite Grok talks](#) on what they say is the “tyranny of administrative (green) power” in New Hampshire, referring to the state’s Site Evaluation Committee. The unelected body, which approves projects including green power plants, is a means by which “connected insiders” can approve projects which haven’t met a market test of viability, they argue.

In New York this week, [State of Politics says](#) that there are two races for county executives which could shape the electoral landscape in the state in 2018, with both traditional GOP havens appearing to lean further towards the Democrats. Staying in the Empire State, [Capitol Confidential reports](#) that Democratic Governor, Andrew Cuomo, is considering calling state legislators in for a special legislative session in order to address the recently cut Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). With the Trump Administration’s non-renewal of the federal program, New York State may have to foot the bill for what would have been its allocation of the program.

Continuing on to the Garden State, [Save Jersey gives their top five takeaways](#) from this week’s gubernatorial debate between Democrat Phil Murphy and Republican Kim Guadagno. [Observer reports](#) on Thursday that Murphy has over \$5 million in reserve funds, compared to \$900,000 for Guadagno. [Blue Jersey talks state races](#), spotlighting those where there may be an opportunity for state Democrats to increase their majority in the Assembly.

South

[Blue Virginia](#) this week [writes](#) on the state’s gubernatorial race; former Trump adviser, Steve Bannon has gone “all in” for Republican Ed Gillespie, and what they say has been a “race-baiting” campaign.

Moving south, [GeorgiaPol](#) has its [analysis](#) of the first Republican Gubernatorial candidate forum. Staying in the Peach State, [Better Georgia has the news](#) that Atlanta’s Mayor, Kasim Reed has signed a measure which decriminalizes marijuana, meaning that those caught with an ounce or less will receive a fine rather than a jail term.

This week, [according to Florida Politics](#), a bill to establish a slavery memorial at the Florida state Capitol in Tallahassee passed through committee in the state legislature.

On Thursday, Alabama’s [Yellowhammer writes](#) that a new polls shows that Republican, Roy Moore, leads his Democratic rival, Doug Jones, by eight points among likely voters in the state’s US Senate race.

Heading west, [Something Like the Truth wonders](#) whether Louisiana is ignoring its problems – such as 47 percent of its black children living in poverty – because of institutional racism.

In Arkansas, *Talk Business* [discusses](#) the debate on altering state gun laws – like concealed carry on college campuses – as well as the recent controversy over the state's General Improvement Fund. Remaining in the Natural State, *Arkansas Times* [reports](#) that the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals has allowed an injunction against a new law which would require abortion providers to have a physician with admitting privileges if they prescribe pills to induce miscarriage in the first 8-9 weeks of pregnancy.

Midwest

On Monday, *PlunderBund* [argues](#) that victory in Ohio is only one election away, with voters having the opportunity to remove “hard-right” leaders such as Governor John Kasich and Attorney General, Mike DeWine.

Moving on to Michigan, *RightMI* [says](#) that the “draft Roger Penske” for the US Senate campaign cannot be real, given that he donated to Democratic US Senator Debbie Stabenow, as recently as last year. Staying in the Great Lakes State, *eclecta blog* [reports](#) that a state judge who awarded a child rapist joint custody with the woman he raped has reversed his decision and stayed his own order, and has ordered a new hearing for next week.

On Sunday, *Indy Politics* gives their [opinion](#) of opioids, commenting that they don't blame the city of Indianapolis for taking their manufacturers and distributors to court, arguing that they have been negligent in the way they have allowed their products to be used.

Over in Missouri, *Show me Progress* [says](#) that the state's politics “equal one sad belly laugh over another”, in reference to the latest contender in the state's GOP US Senate primary, Courtland Sykes. They characterize Sykes as a “cartoon version of Trump”.

Heading north, *Dakota Free Press* [writes](#) that the chair of the state's Republican Party, Dan Lederman, was – as of July – registered to vote in both Iowa and South Dakota, something that may open him up to tax liabilities in the latter state.

West and Pacific

On Tuesday, *Colorado Peak Politics* is [skeptical](#) of Governor Hickenlooper's recent trade mission to India, commenting that India has become best known for selling services rather than goods.

Joe Monahan's New Mexico [writes](#) this week that the Albuquerque Mayoral race is looking more and more like a done deal, with Democratic candidate, Tim Keller already looking like he is at the threshold of victory according to a new poll.

Eye on Boise [reports](#) Wednesday that a new political action committee launched by a former Republican lawmaker in Idaho is keen to encourage both Democrats and Independents to register as Republicans so that they can participate in the state's closed GOP primary election.

Are you a taxpayer in Oregon? If you are, it looks like you'll be getting around \$227 back next year from the state based on current revenue forecasts. *Oregon Catalyst* [says](#) that it doesn't matter if the “kicker law” is good or bad public policy – it's one defense against the state taking money that they don't need.

Dianne Feinstein, one of California's US Senators, announced recently that she would be seeking another term, prompting speculation about whether or not she can win reelection. *Fox & Hounds* [says](#) that the electoral math favors Feinstein and that her only real electoral vulnerability is her age.

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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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