

State of the States for 24 November: New Jersey’s segregated schools, North Carolina cities take climate change action, and New Mexico’s preemption problem

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

Northeast

This week, New Hampshire’s *Granite Grok* [argues](#) that the state’s Democrats are ignoring the ‘rape culture’ that they say pervades their own party, after holding their annual Kennedy-Clinton dinner. They write that the fact that they are honoring two men who had problematic relationships with women shows that Democrats need to get their own house in order before pointing the finger at Republicans on issues of sexual impropriety.

Moving on to the Green Mountain State, *VTDigger* [looks](#) at towns which are moving quickly to have their school district mergers approved prior to the deadline at month’s end, and which now have an additional incentive: tax breaks to help consolidated districts to cover their merger costs, which will also lessen the impact of an eight cent tax increase to fund an \$80 million shortfall in the state’s education fund.

Heading south to the Garden State, *Blue Jersey* [comments](#) on new research which has found that New Jersey has the most segregated schools in the country. They say that school segregation is linked to housing segregation, and that this has flow-on effects for local businesses and community cohesion. Staying in New Jersey, *Observer* [writes](#) that Governor-elect Phil Murphy is still in favor of raising taxes on millionaires despite potential complications from the current tax overhaul making its way through the US Congress. One of Murphy’s campaign promises was to increase the marginal tax rate on incomes above \$1 million from 8.97 percent to 10.75 percent. Speaking of Murphy’s campaign promises, *Save Jersey* [claims](#) that the now planned increase of the state’s minimum wage to \$15 per hour will make local businesses more likely to replace workers with robots, and suggests that they be nicknamed “Murphys” in the new Governor’s honor.

Meanwhile in Pennsylvania, *PoliticsPA* [says](#) that despite the success of a vote for a constitutional amendment which would exempt homeowners from local property taxes on their primary residence, these taxes are likely to remain given the need to fund state programs.

South

On Wednesday, *Bearing Drift* [reports](#) on the Virginia Republican Party’s claims that state Democrats have been attempting to “steal an election” by refusing to certify the results of two races, one of them close-run. This is important: the state’s House of Delegates is now split 51-49 in favor of the GOP, so from their point of view, there is no margin for them to lose another seat. *Blue Virginia*, meanwhile [says](#) that the creation of a Bipartisan Election Commission is now a priority for out-going Governor, Terry McAuliffe, after vulnerabilities in the state’s voting systems were exposed in the summer.

Florida Politics this week [gives a word of warning](#) to state Democrats who are interested in taking State Senator Jeff Brandes’ seat next year after winning the St. Petersburg mayoralty this year. They comment that there are more registered Republican voters in Brandes’ district compared to St. Petersburg and far fewer African-American voters.

In North Carolina, *The Progressive Pulse* [says](#) that as conservative legislators ignore concerns over climate change, city officials in Wilmington are piloting projects to respond to rising sea levels.

Moving on to Alabama, *Yellowhammer* [comments](#) that Governor Kay Ivey’s support for US Senate candidate Roy Moore, despite the fact that she believes those who have accused him of sexual impropriety, is not surprising. She is prioritizing the Republican agenda over Moore’s moral conduct, they say.

Arkansas Times this week talks on a [new analysis](#) which argues that a state law meant to block LGBT ordinances is unconstitutional. While the Arkansas Supreme Court has upheld its constitutionality, it has yet to hear arguments that it is also an equal protection violation.

On Monday, *The Okie* [reports](#) comments from State Senate President Pro Tempore, Mike Schulz (R) that Governor May Fallin’s veto of the revised 2018 state budget throws it “further into chaos”.

Midwest

On Wednesday, *Plunderbund* [looks](#) at whether those who support Ohio’s largest charter school, the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT), are fueling a Republican ‘coup’ by funding efforts to take down state House Speaker, Cliff Rosenberger, who has been less favorable towards bills which would support ECOT.

Eclctablog [reports](#) this week that the top official in the administration of Governor Rick Snyder who has been accused of multiple crimes related to Flint’s water crisis, Dr. Eden Wells, has been appointed by Snyder to lead the state’s newly-formed Public Health Advisory Council.

Howey Politics Indiana [says](#) that the state’s attempts to overturn its current ban on the sale of carry-out alcohol on a Sunday (the last in place in the country) are a job only half done. While the Sunday prohibition may be about to end, sales of cold beer will still not be allowed.

Wisconsin’s *The Political Environment* [argues](#) that Governor Scott Walker’s ‘fretting’ over having to run for re-election while facing out-of-state money is bogus, given that 13 out-of-state billionaires wrote him large checks during his 2012 recall election fight.

Blog for Iowa [links to a video](#) this week which states that the state has the worst Medicaid privatization of all 50 states.

Late last week the Keystone Pipeline system spilled tens of thousands of gallons of oil-sands crude in North Dakota. *Dakota Free Press* [reports](#) that the spill actually took place on the land of what was a vocal opponent of the pipeline back in 2007.

West and Pacific

On Monday, *Colorado Peak Politics* [wonders](#) if the state’s Lieutenant Governor, Donna Lynne, is campaigning for the governorship on the public dime, after stopping in Pueblo for a town hall meeting where she states that she hoped that the Democrats would keep the governor’s office next year.

Moving on, *New Mexico Politics with Joe Monahan* [writes](#) that women are eyeing up offices in the Treasure State which have never seen women elected, such as state land commissioner, and to the US Senate. Staying around, *Progressnow NM* [says](#) that while progressives have had some victories in the state’s cities, these wins may well be at risk if the state’s legislature brings in preemption bills which would undermine the state’s ‘home rule’ cities.

In Montana, *Combat!* [comments](#) that the state’s Democrats have been figuratively trampled once again after the recent special legislative session saw the Republican-controlled legislature throw out the Democrats’ agenda and push their own.

Fox & Hounds this week [sees](#) a new side of Lieutenant Governor, Gavin Newsom. They write that he has previously seemed to be ‘boyish...slick, and too eager to please’. By contrast, Newsom’s comments this week at a q&a event he was much more blunt, provocative, and ‘salty’.

Hawaii’s *Honolulu Civil Beat* this week [looks into](#) why one of its State House seats remains vacant given that the office holder left last month.

Featured image: “[Welcome to New Jersey, nothing to report](#)” by [MPD01605](#) is licensed under [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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