

State of the States for 3 November: Maryland’s “grovelling” Democrats, Iowa’s “Ag-gag” law challenged, and lobbying in Montana

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

Northeast

On Wednesday, *Pine Tree Politics* [wonders](#) what and who Maine’s Democrats really want ahead of next year’s gubernatorial election. They say that many of the state party’s potential primary candidates have a moderate profile, in contrast to the more leftward drift of the national party.

Continuing on to New Hampshire, *Granite Grok* [reports](#) that a state House Committee has rejected legislation which would ban so-called conversion therapies.

In Rhode Island, *RI Future* [says](#) that politicians, activists, and survivors have celebrated the passage of the Protect RI Families Act, signed by Governor Gina Raimondo this week, which restricts access to guns for domestic abusers.

On Monday, Connecticut’s *Make Blue Red* [comments](#) that for the first time, state Democrats have not got all they wanted in a budget after infighting in the state House caucus over state GOP measures on taxes and limits on spending and borrowing.

Heading on to the Empire State, *Capitol Confidential* [writes](#) that there are two things certain in Albany (the state capital): death and coroner elections, 37 of which are happening state-wide next week. Staying in New York, [according](#) to *State of Politics* the heads of the Erie County Republican Party, Nick Langworthy has called on Governor Andrew Cuomo to answer questions on a recent sexual harassment investigation into a senior economic aide.

As New Jersey prepares to go to the polls next week to elect a new Governor, *Save Jersey* [says](#) that a state Democratic Senator in a swing district has disavowed his party’s gubernatorial candidate’s pledge to make the Garden State a Sanctuary State. Sticking around, *Blue Jersey* [looks](#) at a racist mailer in a local school board election in Edison.

In Pennsylvania this week, *PoliticsPA* has the [news](#) that ahead of the state’s judicial elections, large donations are coming from a small number of donors to candidates from both parties.

South

On Monday, *Political Maryland* [comments](#) that state Democrats were ‘groveling’ by offering extra education funding at a state teachers’ union convention in the hopes that they would get their support in the party’s gubernatorial primary.

In Kentucky, *Blue in the Bluegrass* [says](#) that GOP Governor, Matt Bevin seems to have little respect for either the state’s laws or its voters, after his office was ordered to pay the expenses of Planned Parenthood following a no-show by his representatives for a deposition in an abortion case.

As well as in state elections, Virginians will also be voting on Proposition A next week. *Blue Virginia* [writes](#) that the measure deals with school modernization in Richmond, and if passed, would put pressure on state legislators to put forward a plan for needed school improvements.

Continuing on to North Carolina, *NC Capitol Connection* [reports](#) that new polling shows that Governor Roy Cooper’s favorability has dropped below 50 percent for the first time since he came into office, at the same time as President Trump’s ratings have been on the increase in the state. Staying in the Tar Heel State, *The Progressive Pulse* has the [news](#) that three federal judges overseeing a case on racial gerrymandering in the state’s legislative maps have dismissed a GOP appeal that they should have another opportunity to redraw the same districts.

On Tuesday *Florida Politics* [says](#) that Democratic US Representatives Al Lawson and Darren Soto have been urging GOP Governor, Rick Scott to lengthen a time-limit extension he imposed following Hurricane Irma so food stamp recipients can keep receiving benefits without risking their 90-day deadline.

In Mississippi *Y’all Politics* [argues](#) that it’s time for State Senator to ‘put up or shut up’ and decide whether or not he will contest the US Senate seat currently held by Roger Wicker.

Midwest

This week, Ohio’s *Plunderbund* [says](#) that GOP Governor John Kasich is playing ‘hide-and-seek’ with the national media as to his 2020 presidential intentions while the opioid-overdose crisis in his state continues to rage on. Kasich has thus far refused to tap the state’s \$2 billion rainy-day fund to address the crisis, citing the potential for another economic crisis to affect Ohio.

Masson’s Blog talks on Indiana’s opioid epidemic, [writing](#) that a recent symposium in Indianapolis shows that there are mixed feelings on programs such as syringe exchanges.

Over in Illinois, *Capitol Fax* [reports](#) on a new study that has found that nearly 60 percent of guns seized in Chicago come from out of state dealers, with 20 percent of them traceable back to Indiana.

Moving on to Wisconsin, *Blogging Blue* [says](#) that gubernatorial candidate (and long-time Independent), Mike McCabe has ‘picked a fight’ with the state’s Democratic Party. McCabe wants to run in the state’s Democratic primary and to have access to the state party’s voter membership database. Since he hasn’t actually joined the Wisconsin Democratic Party, they are understandably not keen to give him that information. *The Political Environment* meanwhile [writes](#) this week that the state Assembly Speaker, Republican, Robin Vos, has been driving the Assembly on a “sharp right turn” by moving forward bills which would limit female state employees’ health care and would allow mining to toxify state waterways.

Blog for Iowa [says](#) on Monday that this week the constitutionality of the state’s “Ag-gag” law has been challenged in a federal lawsuit. The lawsuit maintains that the 2012 measure, which criminalizes undercover investigations to expose poor conditions for workers and environmental harms, is a violation of Iowans First Amendment rights.

West and Pacific

On Wednesday this week, *The Montana Post* [draws our attention](#) to lobbyist, Mark Baker, who is attempting to get the state to accept money from CoreCivic, a private prison company, if they agree to extend their contact for another decade. Baker also represents big tobacco in the legislature, which are concerned about a potential tobacco tax; a deal with CoreCivic would reduce the likelihood of the legislature adopting such a tax.

Idaho’s *The Blue Review* [looks](#) at whether new arrivals to the state bring new political beliefs. Some locals are worried that a new influx of migrants may make the state more like California, politically.

In New Mexico, *Joe Monahan* [talks](#) on Governor Susana Martinez’s ‘long and painful goodbye’; Martinez’s public polling is now around 37 percent, a rating which they ascribe to the state’s poor economy and relatively high unemployment rate.

Over in California, *Fox & Hounds* [reviews](#) the state Democrats’ gubernatorial debate. They comment that the four candidates left a large stone unturned by not discussing a recent state Senate bill which would establish a single-payer healthcare system. Staying in the Golden State, *Flash Report* [says](#) that the State Senate has been holding committee hearings on hate speech, something they worry may lead to people’s First Amendment rights being stepped on.

Heading out to Hawaii, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [looks](#) at how civic dialogue might be improved in the Aloha State.

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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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