

State of the States for 26 January: New York and Montana take action on net neutrality, big ideas for Arkansas, and Arizona's landmark opioid bill

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

Northeast

On Monday, *VTDigger* [reports](#) that a public hearing of two legislative committees saw a great deal of support expressed for a publicly funded health plan which would provide primary care for all. The Green Mountain State has previously attempted universal healthcare in 2011 and 2014, but supporters hope that the latest slate of bills will not meet the same fate.

Moving on to New York, *State of Politics* [writes](#) that lawmakers have called for a \$2 million campaign which would promote the 2020 census in the Empire State. Counting is important given the current concerns that the 2022 round of Congressional reapportionments may mean that the state could lose as many as two seats. Staying in New York State, *Capitol Confidential* has the [news](#) that Governor Andrew Cuomo has signed an executive order which would deny state contracts to telecommunications firms which did not adhere to net neutrality.

Over in New Jersey this week, *Observer* [says](#) that newly minted Governor, Phil Murphy will soon reverse his predecessor, Chris Christie's policy that made it easier for people to carry a handgun. *Save Jersey*, meanwhile, [lets us know](#) that embattled US Senator Bob Menendez is planning on running for reelection even though Federal prosecutors have stated that they are planning to try him once again on corruption charges.

In Pennsylvania, *Politics PA* reports that US Representative, Pat Meehan has [announced](#) he will not be seeking reelection this cycle, following allegations that he sexually harassed a staffer.

South

Political Maryland [wonders](#) how low the city of Baltimore's situation can go, commenting that Mayor Catherine Pugh has had a "rough" first year which has included crumbling infrastructure, water shortages and crime problems.

On Wednesday, *Blue Virginia* has the [news](#) that the Old Dominion State has its first Whig Congressional candidate in 160 years in the form of Peter Carey who is contesting the 11th District.

Continuing on to South Carolina, *FITSNEWS* [breaks down](#) Governor Henry McMaster's first inaugural address to state lawmakers, commenting that it was a success in that the 70-year old did not fall down during the address.

Better Georgia [writes](#) this week that the state's adoption laws are being updated for the first time in nearly three decades. They say that conservative lawmakers have stalled this update by amending a bill which would allow adoption agencies to refuse potential parents based on the agency's mission. They say that such language will hurt the state in other ways, like discouraging Amazon from potentially siting its second headquarters there.

In the Sunshine State, *Florida Politics* [reports](#) that the state House passed a bill which would mean that any future tax of fee increase would have to be approved by a supermajority of the state House.

Arkansas Times looks at some [big ideas](#) for the Natural State in 2018, including removing incentives to build expensive power plants, ending student debt, and eliminating at-large city board positions.

This week, the Alabama House of Representatives passed a measure which would remove special elections for the state's vacated US Senate seats. *Yellowhammer* [says](#) that if it becomes law, the bill would make a vacated seat a de facto GOP seat, given that the state has a Republican Governor.

Midwest

Indy Politics [writes this week](#) that a new poll for Indiana's US Senate seat shows that Republican Representative Todd Rokita leads his rivals, Luke Messer and Mike Braun.

Moving west, *Right Wisconsin* [suggests](#) that an influx of private sector blue collar jobs may have helped the state's downward trend in union membership to level off. Staying in Wisconsin, *The Political Environment* [reviews](#) Governor Scott Walker's State of the State speech this week, commenting that he 'ran away' from important issues such as the environment and the subsidies offered to Foxconn for it to locate in the state.

North Dakota's *Say Anything* has the [news](#) that US Senator Heidi Heitkamp has seen an 11 point drop in her approval rating. While she still has a net approval rating of +17, she is vulnerable in the Republican-majority state this coming November.

Heading south, *Dakota Free Press* [says](#) that state Senator Stace Nelson has proposed a bill which would ban undocumented students from attending universities. Staying in South Dakota, *The Constant Commoner* [rounds up](#) the legislature's 'dumb bills', such as one which would fine and jail anyone who displayed the state seal improperly.

West and Pacific

On Monday, *The Montana Post* [reports](#) that Governor Steve Bullock has also signed an order which would require state contractors to adhere to the principles of net neutrality.

In Colorado this week, *Colorado Peak Politics* [wonders](#) why Democratic Governor, John Hickenlooper is pushing to kill a state Senate Bill which would fund roads by diverting state sales tax receipts. They say that state Democrats may be intending to hike taxes to fund infrastructure instead.

Blog for Arizona has the [news](#) Friday that the state's legislature has passed a 'landmark' bipartisan bill which reforms opioid treatment services in the states, including not sending those suffering from an overdose to jail.

Governor Jerry Brown gave his final State of the State address as Governor of California this week. *Flashreport* [argues](#) that the real state of the state is that Governor Brown is leaving California bankrupt and homeless.

Heading up to Oregon, *Oregon Catalyst* [says](#) that Measure 101 – which Oregonians will be voting on – is a tax, and that readers should not be fooled by those who say that it will approve 'temporary assessments' to fund health care.

In Hawaii, *Honolulu Civil Beat* writes that Governor David Ige identified homelessness as one of the state's biggest problems in his own State of the States address this week.

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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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