

State of the States for 16 March: Vermont government's gun stockpile, Hawaii considers its own individual mandate, and can a pro-life Democrat win in South Dakota?

USAPP Managing Editor, [Chris Gilson](#), looks at the week in US state blogging.

Northeast

On Monday, *Granite Grok* [profiles](#) a still active vestige of New Hampshire's colonial era, the state's Executive Council. The five-member body, which is defined by the state's constitution, offers a 'firewall' of sorts to ensure that executive power does not overreach.

Moving on to the Green Mountain State, *VT Digger* [says](#) that a new law to deal with guns which find their way into the state's possession (following the death of the owner, for example) could clear the way for the Vermont government to sell guns. The state government apparently has over 1,100 firearms in its stockpile.

This week saw former top aide of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, Joe Percoco found guilty of taking bribes for political influence during the 2014 gubernatorial election. *Capitol Confidential* [reports](#) that when asked about Percoco, Cuomo believed that he was doing "transition work" at that time when he would return to the Executive office while working as the Governor's campaign manager.

Moving on to New Jersey, *Observer* [says](#) [talks](#) on Governor Phil Murphy's new budget, which includes income and sales tax increases which are aimed at raising as much as \$1.5 billion. Staying in the Garden State, *Save Jersey* [reckons](#) that Murphy's budget is bad for businesses, jobs, and for young people in the state, and that it will "crush small businesses and the middle class".

In Pennsylvania this week, Democrat Conor Lamb edged out Republican Rick Saccone in the special election for the state's 18th Congressional district by fewer than 1,000 votes. *PoliticsPA* has the [news](#) that state Republicans are pushing for the voting machines to be impounded for a recount amid accusations of voting irregularities.

South

On Tuesday, Virginia's *Bearing Drift* [says](#) that voters may have an unwelcome surprise for Dave Brat, the Republican Congressman for the state's 7th district, this fall. A new statewide poll shows Democrats leading the GOP in a generic ballot.

Moving on to North Carolina, *NC Capitol Connection* [reports](#) that Governor Roy Cooper has come under fire from state Republican leaders for his continuing attempt to use the state's courts to block a efforts by the legislature to introduce a bipartisan elections and ethics board.

Better Georgia this week [says](#) that the state's Lieutenant Governor, Casey Cagle has been misusing taxpayer's money, as it was revealed that he had taken over 200 flights costing more than \$250,000 in the state over the last five years.

In the Sunshine State, *Florida Politics* has the [news](#) that, apparently seeing the electoral writing on the wall, US Representative David Jolly will not be running for office this year. Jolly, who held the state's 13th district from 2014 to 2017 was convinced not to try to run again after seeing Conor Lamb's victory in a Trump-supporting Pennsylvania district this week.

Yellowhammer [argues](#) this week that Alabama legislators need to exercise "prudence and wisdom" when considering whether to arm the state's teachers in the wake of the school shooting in Parkland, Florida last month.

Speaking of state legislators, *Arkansas Blog* [comments](#) that the state's governing body will "slouch toward home" after an emergency session where they considered measures such as the regulation of pharmacy benefit managers, amending an open alcohol container law, and approving a school voucher bill – hardly emergencies, they say.

Midwest

On Wednesday, *Plunderbund* [reports](#) that hundreds of high school students marched on the Indiana Statehouse to demand stricter gun laws. Possibly in response to advance warning of the march, state Senate leaders pulled their planned session so that lawmakers would not have to be at the state capitol.

Moving on to Illinois, *Capitol Fax* has a [roundup](#) of commentary on Governor Bruce Rauner's veto this week of a bill which would have introduced licensing for gun dealers; at least one Democratic State Senator has called Rauner a "lap dog for the NRA".

Right Wisconsin [wonders](#) on Wednesday if state Democrats will repudiate recent comments from former Secretary of State, and presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton that backward looking, racist and sexist messages appealed to people in the states she didn't win in 2016 (one of which was Wisconsin).

Blog for Iowa [says](#) this week that state Republicans are attempting to make applying for worker's compensation without having "sufficient medical evidence" a felony offence.

South Dakota's *The Constant Commoner* this week [wonders](#) if a pro-life Democrat can win in the state. They refer to State Senator Billie Sutton, who will be the Democrats' gubernatorial nominee in the fall, and who has a record of supporting pro-life measures in the state legislature.

Heading north, *Say Anything blog* [carries comments](#) from a state Democrat which describe the party's recent convention as a "celebration of incompetence".

West and Pacific

The Montana Post on Thursday [argues](#) that the state's Medicaid expansion was the greatest jobs bill ever passed, as it infused the state's economy with over \$500 million in healthcare spending which has created more than 5,000 jobs every year since 2016.

In Idaho, *Eye on Boise* [reports](#) that the state House has endorsed a law which would ease some of the state's mandatory minimum drug sentences where a judge finds that that imposing them would be an "injustice", and when there is no danger to society.

In Arizona this week, *Blog for Arizona* [says](#) that right wing Republicans in the state legislature have proposed the rolling back of a 2016 ballot measure – approved by voters – which increased minimum wages and allowed local governments to introduce paid leave policies.

CALmatters [wonders](#) Thursday if the Golden State's high speed rail project is still a "train to nowhere" as some have dubbed the ten-year long effort to improve California's transport. They conclude that a bullet train between Los Angeles and San Francisco is a solution in search of a problem. Staying in California, *Fox & Hounds* [considers](#) whether or not the state is becoming "another Taiwan" as conflicts between the powerful state and the federal government continue to grow.

In Hawaii, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [writes](#) that in the face of the Trump administration's efforts to repeal it, state lawmakers want to preserve Obamacare in the state, and are now considering proposals to introduce a state version of the program's individual mandate.

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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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