

# State of the States for 9 March: Back to the past for New Jersey GOP, Florida legislators tarred and feathered, and California vows to fight DOJ immigration suit

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

## Northeast

On Wednesday, *Granite Grok* [reports](#) that the New Hampshire House of Representatives has voted to pass a bill which would ban discrimination based on gender identity. They comment that the bill will actually regress women's rights back decades by removing their legal protection to use same-sex only spaces and be members of women-only organizations.

Heading on to Rhode Island, *RIPR* has the [news](#) that a new poll shows that the state's gubernatorial race between incumbent governor, Gina Raimondo and a potential Republican challenger, Allan Fung, is a close one, with Raimondo only leading by 2.5 percent.

In New York, *State of Politics* [comments](#) that this year's gubernatorial primary won't be like 2014's when the then as now incumbent, Governor Andrew Cuomo, faced a rebellion from his left. Following that fight and Cuomo's win, the governor shored up his left-flank, and his main threat appears to be from former Sex and the City star, Cynthia Nixon who looks like she's planning to run in the Democratic primary for Cuomo's job.

Meanwhile, in the Garden State, *Blue Jersey* [argues](#) that the state's Republican Senators are moving New Jersey back to the past after they introduced a bill which would require doctors to offer an ultrasound to a pregnant woman who was seeking an abortion. Staying in New Jersey, *Observer* [says](#) that lobbyists spend almost \$91 million trying to influence state officials last year, the second highest number on record.

In the lead up to the March 13<sup>th</sup> special election in Pennsylvania's 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, *PoliticsPA* [writes](#) that outside money has been pouring in to candidates: Democrat Conor Lamb, and his opponent, Republican, Rick Saccone. Lamb has received \$460,000 in donations from New York and California alone.

## South

On Tuesday, *wataugawatch* of North Carolina has the [news](#) of a new scandal for state House Speaker, Tim Moore. Moore is accused of using his official position by intervening with the state's Department of Environmental Quality to avoid environmental fines related to a property he had bought with several business partners.

Continuing on to the Peach State, *GeorgiaPol* [looks](#) at Secretary of State Brian Kemp's new campaign advertisement, where the Republican touts his record of fighting against the Obama administration and states he is ready to "track and immediately deport criminal aliens".

In Florida, state legislators have been considering gun related legislation in the wake of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman High School on February 14<sup>th</sup>. *Florida Politics* [reports](#) that Republican and Democratic State Senators who had voted for new gun restrictions, as well as those who had supported a ban on assault weapons were given "jars full of tar and feathers labeled [the] 'Enemy of Freedom Award'".

Heading west to Alabama, *Yellowhammer* [says](#) that the state's House Judiciary Committee has approved a bill which would allow the state's death row inmates to be executed with nitrogen gas, a method which has never been used by any state.

On Friday, *Something Like the Truth* [talks](#) on Louisiana's "mysterious" budget cuts, which state Republicans have been talking about for years without actually identifying any specific cuts which would close the state's \$700 million budget shortfall which will remain once a suite of temporary taxes expire at the end of June.

Dan Boren served as US Representative for Oklahoma's 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional district from 2005 to 2013. So why is his campaign still spending money? *The Okie* [writes](#) that Boren for Congress spent \$14,285 in 2017 and nearly \$290,000 since he left office.

*Big Jolly Times* [wonders](#) on Monday if Texas Governor Greg Abbott and Lieutenant Governor, Dan Patrick, know that they are in trouble after state Democrats saw very competitive primary races. They comment that Democrats are turning out in response to Donald Trump, and because Abbot has attacked several moderate Republican state legislators, calling them Democrats

## Midwest

In Wisconsin, *The Political Environment* [comments](#) that GOP Governor, Scott Walker has "debased" the state's Department of Natural Resources by exempting the development of farmland and wetlands from routine environmental permits and assessments so that the Foxconn company is able to divert 7 million gallons a day of water from Lake Michigan. Staying in the Badger State, *RightWisconsin* [writes](#) this week that according to a new poll, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Evers leads the current Democratic gubernatorial primary field, with 18 percent. With 44 percent responding "Don't know" to the poll, whether or not Evers will face Walker in the fall is still up in the air.

Moving on to Illinois, *Capitol Fax* [says](#) that according to a poll, 84 percent of the state's residents think that it is heading in the wrong direction, and that 66 percent favor the legalization of medical marijuana.

On Friday, *Blog for Iowa* [talks](#) on the "Dirty Dozen" bills which are working their way through the state legislature. These include an unfunded mandate to enforce federal immigration laws, a ban on abortion after six weeks of pregnancy, and one which would change gubernatorial candidate listings so the top spot would be reserved for the candidate who won the last election.

*Dakota Free Press* also [discusses](#) legislation this week, previewing four bills in areas such as the petition process, legislators' salaries and alcohol tax reform, which they argue are "worth fighting for" as they make their way through committee.

Moving on to North Dakota, *SayAnythingBlog* [looks](#) at a new poll which has the state's incumbent US Senator, Heidi Heitkamp losing to a generic Republican candidate by two percentage points. They comment that Heitkamp still has a great deal of support from North Dakotans who are willing to support Republicans – but she can ill afford to lose any of them.

## West and Pacific

On Wednesday, *Joe Monahan* games out the New Mexico Democratic Party pre-primary nominating convention. They [determine](#) that US Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham is likely to get the nomination and looks set to gain 60 to 69 percent of the delegate vote.

*Blog for Arizona* feels the need to [revisit](#) "the first rule of holes" – that when you're in one, you should stop digging – when talking about the "Tea-Publicans" in the state legislature. State Republicans are pushing for a new tax cut, one which could cut as much as \$182 million from the state's budget, at a time when state funding for schools has already plummeted.

The Golden State was in the news this week, after the Trump administration's Department of Justice, led by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, launched a lawsuit against California over its "Sanctuary State" policies. *CALmatters* [reports](#) that the state's Democratic Governor, Jerry Brown, has called the lawsuit a "war against the state", and that "it will not stand".

Heading over to Colorado, *Colorado Peak Politics* [reports](#) that Denver Public Schools are taking a “knee-jerk” reaction to the recent Florida school shooting by pledging to say no to all future grants from the National Rifle Association, grants, which they say fund gun safety programs, and school clubs.

Continuing on to Idaho, *Eye on Boise* [says](#) that the Trump administration has refused to allow Governor Butch Otter’s proposal to allow the sale of health insurance plans in the state which do not comply with the Affordable Care Act.

[According](#) to *The Montana Post* Montana is #1 – in inequality that is. Apparently a new study shows that rapid income growth among the upper class in the Treasure State is behind Montana’s dubious ranking.

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