

State of the States for 2 March: Democrats turn out in Texas primary, Indiana overturns Sunday booze ban, and Hawaii's plan to switch to all-mail elections

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

Northeast

Granite Grok [celebrates](#) what they say was a 'great day' in the New Hampshire House, after a number of bills were passed covering issues like the prohibition of sobriety checkpoints, and the annulment of arrest or convictions for possessions of $\frac{3}{4}$ of an ounce of marijuana.

The recent tragic shooting in Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida has prompted calls for stricter gun laws across the country. *VTDigger* [writes](#) that Vermont's 'noble' gun culture can survive "carefully considered gun regulation".

Moving on to New York, *State of Politics* has the [news](#) that the state Senate have found an additional \$1.5 billion in extra money with which to help plug the state's \$4.4 billion deficit. The extra cash is not surprising given that 2018 is an election year.

In the Garden State this week, *Observer* [comments](#) that the big changes proposed by new Governor Phil Murphy will take longer than the traditional 100 days to implement. They write that the "ship of state needs massive repair before it can race", referring to the tenure of his predecessor, Chris Christie. Staying in New Jersey, *Save Jersey* [lets us know](#) that state Democrats are demanding voting rights for "incarcerated pedophiles [and] murderers", after state lawmakers pushed to change the law to allow those in prison, or on probation or parole, to vote.

On March 13th, voters in the Keystone State's 18th Congressional district will go to the polls in a special election. *PoliticsPA* [reports](#) that the Democratic candidate, Conor Lamb has raised \$3.2 million so far in his election campaign, with the average individual contribution standing at \$33.

South

On Monday, *Seventh State* brings us [highlights](#) from the Maryland's Democratic gubernatorial primary debate, including that former Hillary Clinton advisor, Alec Ross, was unafraid to criticize Democrats who he felt were not sufficiently progressive.

Heading south, *Blue Virginia* [talks](#) on how Governor Ralph Northam might be able to expand Medicaid in the Old Dominion State. They suggest that Northam should threaten to veto a bill benefitting the Dominion energy company unless the State Senate passes the Medicaid expansion.

In North Carolina, *The Progressive Pulse* [writes](#) that the state is a cautionary tale for what happens when taxes are cuts, citing large budget shortfalls, a lukewarm economy, and additional burdens on African-Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans in the state.

The Peach State was in the news this week as Delta airlines – which is headquartered in Atlanta – stated that it would be rescinding the National Rifle Association's discount with the carrier. [According](#) to *GeorgiaPol*, in response, State Senator, Rick Jeffares called on the state legislature to say no to a request from the airline for a \$40 million tax break on jet fuel.

Moving on to the Sunshine State, *Florida Politics* [reports](#) that budget writers in the state House and Senate have this week agreed to contribute \$3 million towards the construction of a public shooting range. The range will be co-funded by the National Rifle Association.

Texas this week saw early voting in the state's primary election, ahead of this year's midterms in November. *Big Jolly Times* [has the news](#) that early voting in Harris County is different compared to the 2016 presidential primary: Democrats have turned out in numbers not seen since 2008 when Barack Obama ran for office for the first time.

Midwest

Masson's Blog [reports](#) that – at long last – Hoosiers are able to purchase alcohol for carry-out on a Sunday, after 'emergency' legislation was enacted to remove the prohibition.

Capitol Fax of Illinois has a [polling update](#) for the state's gubernatorial contest: incumbent Governor Bruce Rauner leads his Republican primary challenger, Jeanne Ives, by 20 points, while the leading Democratic primary candidate, JB Pritzker leads Rauner 50 to 35 percent.

Heading west, *The Iowa Republican* happily has the [news](#) that Iowa has been ranked the best state in the nation according to a report from US News and World Report. They say that the news will make it even harder for state Democrats to unseat Governor Kim Reynolds this fall. *Blog for Iowa*, meanwhile, [wonders](#) whether the Hawkeye State is 'owned' by the conservative Koch brothers, after a budget bill was rushed through state legislative committees which would cut a further \$1 billion in revenues in a state they say that can't even pay its current bills.

On Monday, *Say Anything* blog of North Dakota [says](#) that state Democrats will have competition for a party endorsement for the first time in a while, after news of a second potential candidate for the state's at-large Congressional district. Apparently, state Democrats have not had a competitive primary fight like this since before 2000.

In South Dakota, *Dakota Free Press* [celebrates](#) bicamerality, after the state House State Affairs Committee killed a measure passed by the state Senate which would have expanded the state militia under the state's constitution to include "any adult able-bodied person residing in the state."

West and Pacific

In the Centennial State this week, *Colorado Peak Politics* [says](#) that US representative and gubernatorial candidate has moved to the 'left of the radical left' on healthcare, with his plan to bring universal health care to western states. Polis' claims come after taxpayers failed to approve a ballot proposal for universal health care in the last election.

The Montana Post meanwhile [reports](#) that a state Republican, Matt Regier, has written an editorial blaming the legalization of gay marriage for the rise of mass shootings in the US.

Blog for Arizona has the [news](#) that the state's Senate has approved a Republican plan which would amend a proposal to change the structure of the state's Independent Redistricting Commission to increase its size to nine commissioners (instead of eight). The concern is about how the three independent commissioners would be selected; essentially in a way that leaves greater power in legislators' hands, meaning that they could select 'virtual stand-ins' for themselves.

Moving on to the Golden State, *CALmatters* [comments](#) that three legislators have now been embroiled in sexual harassment scandals after state Senator Tony Mendoza resigned following discussions between his Senate colleagues over whether to expel or suspend him. Staying in California, *Fox & Hounds* [talks](#) on who they think are the winners and losers from the state Democratic Party' convention. They writer that Democratic women were the winners after the #MeToo and #WeSaidEnough movements were part of every politicians' stump speech.

In Hawaii this week, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [says](#) that the Aloha State may switch to all mail elections in 2020, after a bill to mandate voting by post cleared the state House's Finance Committee.

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