
State of the States for 6 April: Florida’s ‘resign to run’ bill, North Dakota’s Teddy Roosevelt obsession, and California’s new mega-vote centers

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

Northeast

In Maine this week, *Pine Tree Politics* [wonders](#), given the legal battles which have already erupted, does the state really want to use ranked-choice voting? At the end of 2016, Maine’s voters approved the new electoral system, but this was followed by a constitutional challenge which is still playing out.

Moving on to Vermont, *VT Digger* [reports](#) that two state representatives were threatened on social media during a recent debate over a new law which would expand gun background checks, ban bump stocks, and set restrictions on magazine size.

RIFuture argues this week that the state [needs](#) better commuter rail with Boston. The roads are increasingly congested, they write, and existing non-Acela trains are relatively slow, meaning that new improvements such as electrification and a more frequent service are required.

Continuing on to The Nutmeg State, *Connecticut Commentary* [looks](#) at the coming race for the state’s 5th Congressional district, following the announcement from the incumbent, Elizabeth Esty, that she would not seek reelection following revelations about sexual harassment and misconduct in her office. With Esty out of the picture, they say, the 5th district is now competitive for Republicans.

In New York, *State of Politics* [says](#) that GOP gubernatorial candidate, Marc Molinaro has recently stated that if Democrats control the state’s Senate, then the governor should be a Republican, as one-party rule of an entire state is not in taxpayers’ best interests.

Save Jersey this week [talks](#) on comments from State Senator Tom Kean, Jr – the top Republican in the state Senate, that Democratic Governor Phil Murphy’s proposed “free” community college program is irresponsible and wrongheaded. Why the ire for the proposals? Its \$50 million cost will put more pressure on the state’s already overburdened taxpayers.

South

On Saturday, *Blue in the Bluegrass* has the [news](#) that teachers in Kentucky have gone on strike following the unexpected passage of pension reforms by the state’s legislature.

Fits News [says](#) that a new bill working its way through the South Carolina legislature would mean that any new laws which sought to limit gun ownership in the state would need a supermajority of both legislative chambers, as well as reinforcing the state government’s ability to preempt municipalities and counties gun measures.

Better Georgia, meanwhile, [reports](#) that after over 15 years of cuts, schools in the Peach State are now funded at a basic level for their operation.

Heading south, *Florida Politics* [writes](#) that a new bill signed by Governor Rick Scott will force local and state office holders to resign from their seats in order to run for federal office if the term overlaps with their current one. The ‘resign-to-run’ law won’t affect Scott (who is tipped to run for US Senate) as his term expires after this year’s general election.

In Alabama, *Yellowhammer* [says](#) that the state’s legislature has approved an \$18.5 million in the states pre-kindergarten program which will mean at least 100 new classrooms for four-year olds in the 2018-19 school year.

Moving on to the Bayou State, *Louisiana Voice* [looks](#) at a new bill which would cut food expenditures for prisoners and college and university students and would increase the prisoners’ work-release pay that the state receives. The measure is aimed to increase revenues ahead of its June 30 budget deadline.

Midwest

Eclecta blog this week [has the news](#) that after seven years, the state of Michigan has handed back control of the city of Flint to local officials. Since 2011, the city had been under emergency management that appeared to do little to improve the city’s problems which included a toxic water supply.

In Illinois, *Capitol Fax* [says](#) that Governor Bruce Rauner – who recently won his Republican primary – has been urged to move to his right by state Representatives, despite polling 22 percentage points below his Democratic rival, J.B. Pritzker.

Moving on to the Badger State, *RightWisconsin* [writes](#) that state Republicans “got their faces slapped”, following a defeat for the GOP in a state Supreme Court election and a state Senate race. They warn that “the wind is in their sails”, referring to the Democrats ahead of November’s midterm elections.

In the Hawkeye State, *Blog for Iowa* is [critical](#) of the state’s new health insurance legislation, which they argue will take the state back to the pre-Obamacare days of “spotty, unreliable coverage”.

Missouri Political News Service this week [wonders](#) if St. Louis – a town that they say was run for decades by “corrupt Democrat politicians” and is “hemorrhaging population”, can really get a project from Elon Musk’s Boring Company to replace an ageing bridge with a tunnel.

Is North Dakota too focused on the 26th president of the United States? *Say Anything* blog [concerns itself](#) with that question this week, after one of the state’s universities has begun building a presidential library for Teddy Roosevelt. Roosevelt ranched in the state for four years in the 1880s, but spent most of his life in New York.

West and Pacific

Blog for Arizona [says](#) that Governor Doug Ducey’s plan to improve school safety – which would see guns removed from those deemed a danger to themselves or others as well as active shooter training for school resource officers – has run into opposition from state Republicans, who have called for teachers to be armed, and Democrats, who argue the plan is ineffective.

Heading on to the Golden State, *Fox & Hounds* [comments](#) that unions want a Republican to face the Democrats’ gubernatorial frontrunner, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom following the state’s top two primary in June. It’s not because they know that a Republican has no chance against a Democrat in California – it’s because only one Democratic candidate will free up the party’s cash to be used elsewhere. Staying in California, *Flashreport* [says](#) that the state’s Attorney General, Xavier Becerra is a “corrupt anarchist”, citing his combative stance against President Trump’s efforts to enforce immigration law in the state. *CalMatters*, meanwhile [reports](#) that five counties in the state have switched from neighborhood polling places to “mega-vote centers” in order to save money and boost midterm voter turnout.

Moving out to Alaska, *Must Read Alaska* [says](#) that the state’s Supreme Court has ruled in favor of the state’s Democratic Party, stating that it can run candidates on its primary ballot, even if they are not party members.

Honolulu Civil Beat this week [wonders](#) what is going on “with all the gut-and-replace trickery” in the state legislature this year following dramatic changes to bills with very little notice.

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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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