

South Carolina furls Confederate flag, Wisconsin's wet budget, and who's governing New Jersey?: US state blog round up for 4 – 10 July

USApp Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson**, looks at the week in U.S. state blogging. [Click here](#) for our weekly roundup of national blogs.

Northeast

Is the Pine Tree State the country's healthiest democracy? *GovBeat* [looks](#) this week at just why it might be, citing a recent study which takes 22 factors into account such as ballot access, voter turnout and representation in state government. Readers should definitely keep their eyes on Maine – at least [according](#) to *Talking Points Memo* who cover the ongoing story of GOP Governor Paul LePage's fight with the state legislature over his refusal to veto dozens of bills that he opposes. LePage has been arguing that he has more time to veto the legislation since the state legislature has been adjourned rather than ended its session.

On Thursday, *The American Prospect* [covers](#) what they call a 'progressive victory' that we have not yet heard of – New York City's new law which bans employers from discriminating against employees and job seekers based on their credit ratings, a screening process which had disproportionately affected the poor and people of colour.

Staying in the Empire State, *State of Politics* [writes](#) this week that Governor Andrew Cuomo's Women for Equality Party may not actually be legal owing to a technical glitch when the party was founded in 2014.

Moving south to New Jersey, *PoliticusUSA* [says](#) that a new poll has shown that a majority of people (69 percent) in the state feel that Governor Chris Christie that he would not make a good president, and that only 26 percent that he can do his current job and govern the state effectively at the same time. On a similar vein, *Blue Jersey* [wonders](#) who actually runs New Jersey when Christie is away, given that there is 'no way' that Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno does so.

South

This week saw the South Carolina state House and Senate vote to remove the Confederate flag from the grounds of the state Capitol. *FITS News* [says](#) that three State Senators who voted the flag have received death threats in the wake of the vote. *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) Friday that the flag had been taken down over Governor Nikki Haley gave her approval. It had been flying on the Capital grounds for the past 54 years. They comment that this is something that should have happened a long time ago and that it is tragic that it took the deaths of nine people in a church at the hands of a racist terrorist to bring it about.



New Jersey Governor Chris Christie Credit: Gage Skidmore (CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Heading south to the Sunshine State, *Saint Peters blog* is very [pleased](#) to hear that Florida Representative, Democrat Alan Grayson has entered the race for the state's open Senate seat in 2016. They are buoyed by the prospect by the likelihood that the controversial Grayson will cause an internal fight in the Democratic Party which will make it easier for the Republican Party to keep the seat. This week also saw the Florida Supreme Court rule that 8 of the state's 27 congressional districts should be redrawn after the GOP-led state legislature's redistricting led to gerrymandered districts. They [say](#) that the state's Republicans stand to lose big because of the redistricting, with the potential for them to lose at least two seats.

In June the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled that a Ten

Commandment monument at the state Capitol would have to be removed. *The Daily Signal* [writes](#) that that Governor Mary Fallin has stated this week that the monument would stay after the state's Attorney General requested that the state's Supreme Court hear the case again.

On Monday, *Americablog* [reports](#) that a Texas couple are suing a county clerk for refusing to marry them even after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional for any state to prohibit same-sex marriage last month. They say that the Clerk has refused to issue the couple a license on religious grounds.

Midwest

This week legislator in Wisconsin passed the state's budget. *Crooks & Liars* [suggests](#) that some of the lawmakers may have been less than sober, having visited a local bar prior to the vote due to a bomb threat in the Capitol. They describe the budget as 'evil, horrible' due to provisions to tax bicycles, reduce state government transparency and make cuts to university funding. Staying in the Badger State, *The Atlantic* [writes](#) that a 7-day workweek could soon be a reality in Wisconsin, as the state's Republican Party is trying to get rid of an existing law which requires employers in the manufacturing and retail sectors to give employees at least 24 hours off during a consecutive seven day period.

Moving south to Illinois, *Townhall* [reports](#) that GOP Governor Bruce Rauner is holding firm against the state's Democratic legislature who are not keen on his reforms which include freezing property taxes, and redistricting reforms. The state government has been in partial shutdown since July 1st.

Bleeding Heartland this week has [four takeaways](#) from what they say is Governor Terry Branstad's destruction of the Iowa state legislature's budget compromise. They write that Branstad has vetoed much of the budget's supplemental spending on education, and that he has 'poisoned the well' for the next year's legislative session.

On Wednesday, *Daily Kos* [says](#) that Kansas' Republican Governor, Sam Brownback, has issued a 'religious refusal' executive order which protects groups and individuals with religious objections to same-sex marriage. The order aims to protect religious leaders who perform marriages and religious groups who provide adoption services.

South Dakota War College [writes](#) on Sunday that the state Democratic Party's website is no longer active – surely not a good sign for the party?

West and Pacific



Take Down The Confederate Flag Rally at SC State House Credit: Perry B McLeod (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0)

The Spot [reports](#) on Friday that Governor John Hickenlooper's #StateOfKind initiative to get Coloradans to commit 10,000 random acts of kindness over six months has been successful.

Heading over to the Gem State, *Eye on Boise* [says](#) that Idaho now has only one district judge after one retired, but that three further names have been submitted by Boise Mayor, Dave Bieter. They say that the state is one of just three states with only two full-time U.S. District Judges.

On Saturday, *FreakOutNation* [reports](#) that the owners of an Oregon bakery who refused to make a cake for a same-sex wedding in 2013 have been ordered to pay \$135,000 in damages by the Bureau of Labor and Industries.

National Journal [looks](#) at Nevada GOP Congressman Joe Heck, who announced this week that he would be running for Democrat Harry Reid's open Senate seat in 2016. They say that Heck will have to win over Hispanic voters – a sizable hurdle for any Republican.



Credit: NFarmerWorld (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0)

California is in the midst of a massive drought, and the state government has recently brought in measures to reduce water usage. *The Daily Signal* [says](#) that at the same time may in the state are concerned that they are paying too much for new desalination plants, they are happy for \$68 billion to be thrown at a new high speed rail project.

Honolulu Civil Beat has the [results](#) of a new study which has found that taking into account of housing costs and salaries that are not keeping up with rising prices, Hawaii is the country's worse place to earn a living.

Featured [image](#): New Jersey Governor Chris Christie Credit: Gage Skidmore (CC-BY-SA-2.0)

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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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