

New Jersey's pension amendment, Florida's new Congressional map, and calls for Chicago Mayor Emanuel to resign: US state blog round up for 5 – 11 December

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

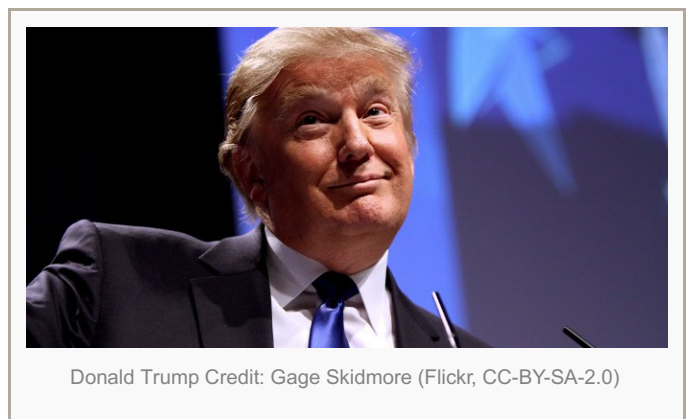
Northeast

On Thursday, *VTDigger* takes a close [look](#) at the aftermath of Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin's abandoning of single payer healthcare reform in the Green Mountain State last December. They say that there are still some 'live embers' of the system, in the form of incremental proposals such as a payroll tax to fund free primary health care and the expansion of low-cost health care to those under 26.

Heading down to New York, *State of Politics* [reports](#) that state lawmakers will next month discuss the recent zero-percent growth in the state's cap on property taxes. They comment that the flat growth is of concern for local government and school officials in the state, who are facing rising costs. Staying in the Empire State, *Times Union* has a [timeline](#) of the rise and fall of Dean Skelos – the former State Senate Majority leader who was this week found guilty of public corruption.

New Jersey's *PolitickerNJ* this week [reports](#) that the state Senate's president, Democrat Steve Sweeney has fired back at criticism from state GOP over his recently proposed constitutional amendment to tackle the Garden States \$80 billion pension shortfall. New Jersey Republicans had expressed concern that the Democrats were attempting to legislate by constitutional amendment, with Sweeney responding that the amendment would not stop future administrations from altering the pension system.

Moving on to the Keystone State, *PoliticsPA* has the [news](#) that the Mayor of Philadelphia, Michael Nutter, has banned Donald Trump from the city in response to Trump's call to ban all Muslims from entering the US. He is also reported to have called Trump 'an asshole' during the press conference. Staying in Pennsylvania, *raging chicken press* [writes](#) Friday that the state House's Speaker, Mike Turzai has been criticised by state Democrats for apparently attending a GOP fundraiser at the same time that the state's 164-day budget stalemate may be coming to an end.



South

On Monday, *Delaware Liberal* has the [news](#) that the state's Governor, Jack Markell has announced a resolution that will officially apologize for the state's role in slavery, to mark the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the 13th amendment.

Heading down to the Sunshine State, *The Shark Tank* [looks](#) at how Florida's newly approved Congressional map will affect the state's delegation. They comment that while most are likely to be safe, the redistricting process means that

several may not be returning to Washington DC in 2017.

Yellowhammer [reports](#) that the US Department of Transportation announced this week that it would be launching an investigation into whether the closure of 31 rural Department of Motor Vehicle offices caused civil rights violations. State Democrats have argued that the closures were targeted at areas of the state with a high percentage of minority residents, who were more likely to be disenfranchised as a result.



Governor Bobby Jindal of Louisiana credit: Gage Skidmore (CC-BY-SA-2.0)

Louisiana Governor, Bobby Jindal has less than a month left in office before Democrat John Bel Edwards takes over. *Something Like the Truth* [wonders](#) how Jindal will spend his final days in office, given that his approval rating is at 20 percent. They say that despite his failings, Jindal will be spending the next few weeks touting his achievements.

Arkansas Times this week [looks](#) at the state Governor, Asa Hutchinson's political strategy aimed at re-branding Arkansas' private health care option (which is funded by Medicaid). They say that while Hutchinson has argued that the private option in the state is ending, it is simply being renamed.

Moving on to Texas, *Burnt Orange Report* [argues](#) that the state's Governor, Greg Abbott, is willing to risk the state's Medicaid funding in order to defund Planned Parenthood in the state.

Midwest

On Monday, *Plunderbund* [writes](#) that despite their desire to implement 'right to work' legislation in Ohio, the state's Republicans know that it would hurt their election fortunes next year, as it would mobilize the state's labor movement against them. Later in the week, they [argue](#) that the state's Attorney General, Mike DeWine is again wasting the state's time and money, this time by launching an arbitrary investigation into Planned Parenthood in the state.

In Michigan this week, *eclecta blog* [says](#) that this week state House Republicans passed a bill which would eliminate straight-ticket voting on state ballots. They comment that the bill may not pass in the Senate as it does not make voting hard enough, as it included a link to another bill which would allow for 'no excuse' absentee ballot voting.

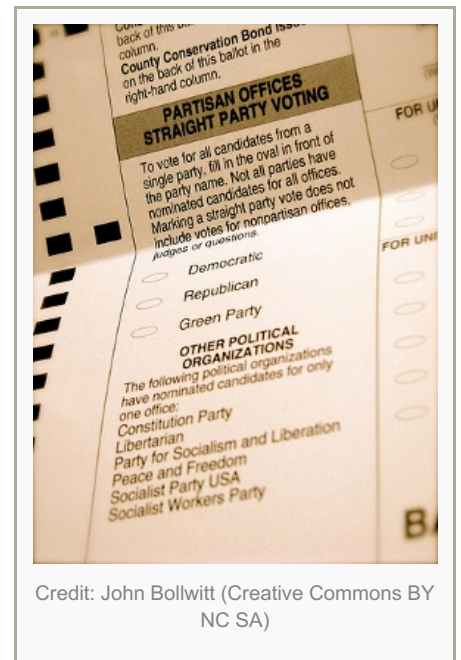
Capitol Fax of Illinois this week has the [news](#) that Governor Bruce Rauner has stated that for now, he is not pushing a right to work agenda for the state, though his proposals to allow local governments and school districts to decide who is collectively bargained is holding up the state's budget agreement. Staying in the Prairie State, *Progress Illinois* [report](#) that because of the ongoing controversy over the shooting of Laquan McDonald by police last year, Chicago Mayor, Rahm Emanuel's disapproval rating now stands at 67 percent. Emanuel also apologized for the case at a City Council meeting this week. Later, they [say](#) that State Representative LaShawn K. Ford has introduced a bill which would legalize the recall of Chicago's mayor.

West and Pacific

Blog for Arizona this week [looks](#) at the first 'WTF' bill of the session, one which mandates that in order to be eligible fo

election as county school superintendent, a person must hold a degree in business, finance, or accounting.

In New Mexico, *Joe Monahan* writes that the state's Governor, Susana Martinez, has responded to a new report which ranks the state as the worst run in country, by stating that she is 'working to reform and improve' the state's education system and economy.



Credit: John Bollwitt (Creative Commons BY NC SA)



Idaho Governor Butch Otter Credit: Jake Putnam (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0)

Over in Idaho this week, *Eye on Boise* says that the state's Governor, Butch Otter, has defended recent payments to the state's former chief lawyer, Tom Perry, for his work on their sage grouse lawsuit. Otter and GOP leaders have been criticized for not using the services of the state's Attorney General, and instead paying Perry half of his former annual salary for two month's work.

Moving on to the Golden State, *Flashreport* [argues](#) Monday that new taxes are not necessary in California, arguing that the state's government is 'awash in cash', with the state's budget estimated to be up by \$3 billion by the end of the fiscal year. On Thursday, *Political Blotter* [wonders](#) if California will ban guns ales to those on terror watch lists, after Congress has repeatedly turned away from enacting the measure as a federal law. *Fox & Hounds*, meanwhile, [urges](#) policymakers not to 'doom Los Angeles' to a permanent housing shortage by accepting calls for a citywide moratorium on the building of high-density housing in the city.

Featured [image](#): Chicago Mayor, Rahm Emanuel. Credit: [Daniel X. O'Neil](#) (Flickr, [CC-BY-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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