

## Job creation in Wisconsin, McConnell is reminded to mind the gap, and does Silicon Valley hold the key to America's future? – US state blog round up for 30 November – 6 December

USApp Assistant Editor, **Natalie Allen**, and Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson**, look at the week in U.S. state blogging. [Click here](#) for our weekly round up of national blogs.

### Northeast

*The Lonely Conservative* questions why New Jersey Governor and new chairman of the Republican Governors Association (RGA), Chris Christie, has refused to come out in support of Rob Astorino, a potential challenger to New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. They theorize that Christie is afraid Astorino will “steal his thunder” and wonder if the RGA can have a do-over in the vote for chairman.

*Roll Call* [reports](#) that former state Senator Richard Rosen will not seek the GOP nod for Maine's 2<sup>nd</sup> District, citing his desire to serve the state closer to home. Rep. Michael H. Michaud, a Democrat who currently holds the 2<sup>nd</sup> District, is running for governor in 2014; Republicans hope to pick up the open seat in what they view as a competitive district. Meanwhile, *Capitol Ticker* asks “[is the Maine economy booming?](#)” While Governor Paul LePage's reelection campaign has been hawking a Federal Reserve report saying just that, but *Capitol Ticker* cautions that the report draws on a three-month index, which is too narrow to draw any broad conclusions about the overall health of the Maine economy.

Back in New York, the *Capitol Confidential* [looks at](#) the state Republican Party's newly released “Jobs Agenda,” which includes tax cuts, promoting charter schools, better job-training programs, and allowing hydrofracking.

*The Political Carnival* [reports on](#) three black students who were arrested in Rochester for blocking the sidewalk while standing at a bus stop. In what seems to be a clear case of racial profiling, the boys were told disperse and put in handcuffs when they tried to explain that they were waiting for the school bus to take them to basketball practice.

### South

Moving south, *The Hillbilly Report* [urges](#) Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell to ‘mind gender gap,’ noting that he polls way behind Democrat Alison Lundergan Grimes (his potential challenger in the midterm elections) with women. Since women make up 53% of voters in Kentucky, McConnell has reason to worry, and *Hillbilly Report* thinks that his poor record on women's issues could take McConnell the route of Mitt Romney or Ken Cuccinelli during the election.

Speaking of gaps, *American Prospect* [details](#) Robert Runcie's, superintendent of Florida's Broward County Public Schools, attempt to close the racial achievement gap by eliminating the schools' zero tolerance policies, which meted out harsh punishments for minor misbehavior. Also in Florida, *SaintPetersBlog* [reports](#) that despite the report from the National Association for Law Placement that only 64.4 percent of law school graduates had a job that called for passing the bar, Florida is still providing incentives for students to go to law school in the form of subsidized tuition.

*Peach Pundit* [looks at](#) two “Stand Your Ground” incidents that happened in Northwest Georgia in the past month, leaving a 17 year-old boy and an elderly man with Alzheimer's dead.

In South Carolina, *Daily Kos* [reports](#) that in spite of Governor Nikki Haley's rejection of a Medicaid expansion in her state, there is an expected 16 percent increase in Medicaid enrollment by June 2015.

*Bearing Drift* contemplates the future of Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell, who is under criminal investigation for failing to report exorbitant gifts from Start Scientific CEO Jonnie Williams, and calls for the feds to [“go to trial or go home.”](#)

*Blue Oklahoma* [ponders](#) state Rep. Lewis Moore’s truly strange blog post in which he argues that “democracy means socialism,” and worries that these sorts of statements will become embedded in the political discourse in Oklahoma.

*Daily Kos* examines the so-called “Texas miracle” of post-recession job creation, arguing that [“the miracle was always more of a mirage.”](#) They point out to the number of Texas children living in poverty rose by 47 percent between 2000 and 2011 and that Texas has the highest rate of people without health insurance in the country.

And in Mississippi, *National Journal* [examines](#) the pressure on 76 year old Senator Thad Cochran (R-MI) to run for a seventh term in the wake of state Senator Chris McDaniel’s decision to run in 2014. While Cochran has been a highly effective and well respected Senator, it is unclear if he could survive a primary campaign against the Tea Party-affiliated McDaniel.

## Midwest

In Missouri, *PoliticMo* [reports](#) that State Representative Steve Webb, a Republican from St. Louis, has resigned due to allegations that he had stolen campaign funds during while head of the Black Caucus.

*Kansas Watchdog* [details](#) the scandal surrounding the state’s Office of Information Technology Services, which could owe the federal government around \$1.2 million due to unreported profits and other bookkeeping violations.

*Illinois Progress* [follows](#) the state’s General Assembly in its attempt to force through a pension reform bill. Lawmakers were given less than one full day to read and react to the 325 page bill leading many Republicans called for a slowdown in the process or an outright rejection of the bill. Staying in Illinois, *American Thinker* sets out some grim [data on gun violence](#) in Chicago in the month of November and warns readers not to expect President Obama to comment on the violence in his home town.

Moving north, *Political Heat* [compares](#) job creation in Minnesota and Wisconsin, concluding that Minnesota has come out ahead because Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker’s policies have not aided the consumer class that drives demand in the state. On a similar note, *Uppity Wisconsin* [reports](#) that although Governor Walker has claimed his reforms have caused a “tremendous turnaround” in the unemployment rate, it appears that most of the drop happened before Walker took office.

Also in Wisconsin, *Blogging Blue* [interviewed](#) Democratic gubernatorial candidate Mary Burke. While Burke has been criticized for her unwillingness to give specific answers on policy questions, she gives fairly detailed answers in this interview focused around economic policy.

In Michigan, *Hit & Run* [looks at](#) Detroit in the wake of the ruling that the troubled city does meet the legal criteria for bankruptcy, focusing on the news that pension cuts may be on the table as the Detroit tries to get back on its feet. *Eclecta Blog* [tells the](#) Michigan Republican Party that it will take much more than honoring Rosa Parks convince minority groups to support the GOP.



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Meanwhile, in South Dakota *Madville Times* [reports](#) on a federal pipeline safety official would admitted that he wouldn't buy or build a house along the pipeline route and wondered what the pipeline will do to housing prices.

### West and Pacific

Continuing westward, *The Spot* [reports](#) that the gun group planning to force a recall of state Senator Evie Hudak has changed their focus in light of her resignation last week, turning their sights instead to the 2014 elections.



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Two blogger from *Blue Oregon* try to apply for financial assistance in the new Cover Oregon health care program and, unsurprisingly, [find it to be a frustrating process](#) .

In California, *Occasional Planet* [condemns](#) several Republican members of the state legislator who have been accused of sending out mailings to their constituents (possibly using state funds) directing them to a fake healthcare exchange site designed to discourage people from signing up for the new insurance. Meanwhile, *Fox and Hounds* challenges the notion that Silicon Valley is at the cutting edge of America's future, citing the disregard for privacy, tax avoidance, and willingness to employ cheap immigrant labor as proof that the country should not put its future in the hands of the "technigentsia."

*Hit & Run* [reports](#) that dozens of same-sex couples got married early Monday morning after the law legalizing gay marriage in the state went into effect. Finally, a *Honolulu Civil Beat* analysis [shows](#) that the bulk of lucrative federal contracts in Hawaii have gone to the same handful of companies over the last ten years, with 10 companies garnering at least \$200 million each and the top two securing over \$1 billion in total.

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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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