

Hillary Clinton's book fizzes, Americans against troops in Iraq, and Obamacare's benefits for jobs and young people – US national blog round up for 14 – 20 June

USApp Managing Editor, Chris Gilson looks at the best in political blogging from the Beltway. Our round-up of state blogs will follow on Saturday afternoon.

The Democratic Party, the GOP and elections

Former Secretary of State and First Lady, Hillary Clinton, continued to promote her new book, *Hard Choices*, this week, fuelling further speculation that she is preparing for a 2016 presidential run. On Saturday, *National Journal* [writes](#) on how Clinton could squander her second chance at the presidency (after losing the Democratic nomination to Barack Obama in 2008). They say that Clinton is repeating the central mistake of her 2008 campaign by 'burying her personality and passion beneath redundant layers of caution, calculation and defensiveness'. *United Liberty* [echoes](#) this sentiment later in the week, saying that Clinton's book is falling far short of her publisher's expectations, with only 60,000 hardcover copies sold, less than half what had been hoped for. On Monday, *PoliticusUSA* is far more [optimistic](#) about Hillary Clinton, covering a new poll that shows that most Americans think that she would do better job than President Obama on every issue. Meanwhile, *The Monkey Cage* wonders whether or not President Obama's record will 'drag down' the Democratic ticket in 2016, writing that by that time, voters may well feel like it is 'time for a change'.

Looking back at last week's defeat of House Majority Leader Eric Cantor in his Virginia Primary, *Daily Kos* [writes](#) on Monday that his challenger, David Brat may have only won because of the thousands of Democratic voters who voted for him, and against Cantor.

While many commentators see the brother of former President George W. Bush, Jeb Bush, as a potential contender for the Republican nomination in the 2016 presidential election, this week *The Atlantic* [takes a different line](#). They say that many in the GOP are increasingly touting Bush as a potential Vice-Presidential candidate. They say that Bush's policies on immigration reform and his position as a 'mainstream' Republican would be acceptable for those on the right of the party, so long as the Presidential nominee was a proven conservative.

This week was a rocky one for the GOP and its attitudes towards certain groups.

On Saturday, *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#)

that presidential hopeful, and New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie, has criticized Texas Governor Rick Perry, for the latter's comparison of homosexuality with alcoholism. Meanwhile, *FreakOutNation* [says](#) that while the Texas GOP's annual convention ended earlier this month, it is still making headlines after a Muslim reporter covering the convention was targeted because of her headdress. *Daily Kos* [looks](#) at the relationship between the Republican Party and Latinos, writing on Sunday that the GOP is unlikely to treat Latinos 'like whites', because the party's base hates them. *PoliticusUSA* [reports](#) that Representative Lou Barletta (R-PA) recently stated in a



Jeb Bush Credit: Gage Skidmore (Creative Commons BY SA)

Pennsylvania radio interview that the House has enough votes to impeach President Obama, because of his actions that have ignored the constitution. They say that this is just a GOP attempt to appeal to their base of 'angry, old, hardcore racists'.

Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda

On Monday, *Hit & Run* [reports](#) on the continuing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) scandal, that sees former official Lois Lerner accused of being involved with the agency's alleged targeting of conservative organizations. They say it does not seem possible that the IRS has lost the 2009 – 2011 emails to and from Lerner that are important to the investigation, due to a computer crash. *Red State* agrees, going further to say that Lois Lerner's emails were not lost, but were [buried](#).

The Supreme Court was back in the news again this week – first up is the decision made on Monday that the anti-abortion group, SBA List, is able to challenge Ohio's recent ban on politicians making knowing or recklessly false statements in election campaigns, [reports](#) *The Volokh Conspiracy*. Meanwhile, *Daily Kos* [reports](#) that the Supreme Court has also approved the constitutionality of the federal prosecution of a man who acted as a 'straw purchaser' of a handgun for a relative – at the time he bought the gun, he indicated that he was the 'actual buyer'.

With Eric Cantor's primary loss and resignation as House Majority Leader last week, it's been election time in the House for his replacement. On Thursday, *The Daily Signal* [reports](#) that House Republicans have chosen current House Whip, Kevin McCarthy (CA) to be Cantor's successor, and that Steve Scalise of Louisiana would replace him in the number three GOP leadership spot. They say that McCarthy is seen as an 'establishment' Republican by the GOP who beat conservative Raúl Labrador (ID), who had pushed the GOP to 'buck the status quo', of the current leadership.

On Wednesday, *Roll Call's* newest blog, *The Container* reports that Congress faces another funding decision – this time, it's how to pay for airports. They [write](#) that Congress needs to decide whether or not raise the Passenger Facility Charge (a fee airports can impose on passengers), which has been capped at \$4.50 since 2000.

Foreign policy, defense and trade

The political blogosphere was dominated this week by commentary on the potential for U.S. involvement in the unfolding conflict in Iraq between the government and militants of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). On Sunday, *Outside the Beltway* [writes](#) that not only is President Obama not to blame for the deterioration of Iraq, given that President Bush negotiated U.S. withdrawal in 2008, there is very little that the U.S. can do to 'fix' the situation at the moment. *Informed Comment* [has](#) a similar sentiment, writing on Tuesday that we should not trust those who are calling for U.S. airstrikes in Iraq, and that the 'shock and awe' tactics of the 2003 invasion have been proven not to work. As the week continues, *National Journal* [ponders](#) whether or not a U.S. airstrike on Iraq would be legal, given that the still-active 2002 Congressional authorization for the Iraq invasion was for action against the government of Iraq. They say that the question of legal authority for military action has come up time and time again, with inconsistent approaches towards the civil wars in Libya and Syria.

On Tuesday, *PoliticusUSA* [reports](#) that a new poll has shown that more than half of Americans are siding with President Obama in his decision not to send combat troops back into Iraq. They say that this desire to not see boots back on the ground is because the American people believe that "it is up to the Iraqis to stabilize their country". *United Liberty* [agrees](#) with the non-intervention sentiment, writing that the Iraq and Afghan wars have cost taxpayers around \$6 trillion, and say that Obama should stop playing the 'world's watchdog'. *The Monkey Cage* [writes](#) on Thursday that U.S. military involvement will hurt Iraq and increase suicide terrorism, much as the original 2003 invasion did.

Obamacare and health policy

In Obamacare commentary this week, *United Liberty* wrote on Monday that Republicans need to take on President Obama if he bails out health insurance companies for their losses on Obamacare's 'risk corridors'. They [say](#) that any such payments to health insurance companies would be illegal, as Congress hasn't appropriated any

money for them. Meanwhile, *Wonkblog* [says](#) that Obamacare is struggling in states like Washington, where the state exchange is still plagued with problems, and that the surge in enrollees is putting pressure on healthcare providers who are struggling to handle the increased numbers.

On a more positive note, *Informed Comment* [writes](#) on Wednesday that the U.S. has gained nearly one million healthcare jobs since the Affordable Care Act was passed, and seven million in other sectors – meaning that Obamacare has been in no way, a ‘job killer’. *The Political Carnival* [reports](#) that a new study has found that young adults’ health has improved, and that they have saved money since Obamacare was introduced.

The economy and society

On Saturday, *Crooks & Liars* [agrees](#) with recent comments from *The Daily Beast*’s Cliff Schechter that the National Rifle Association needs to share some of the blame for mass shootings.

On Monday, *Wonkblog* [looks](#) at what they term, the Fed’s ‘unemployment conundrum’. They say that the Fed has repeatedly gotten its forecasts wrong about the unemployment rate, which they have tended to underestimate in recent years. They say that this is an issue as the Fed has tied its current stimulus program to the unemployment rate, and that it may drop below the 6 percent levels that officials believe is the ‘natural rate’, before its program of bond buying ends this fall.



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On Thursday, *Roll Call's Five by Five* [writes](#) that an amendment by Representative Alan Grayson (D-FL) to block the transfer of military equipment to police of specific equipment has been blocked in the House and will not be debated.

The end of last week saw a Los Angeles court rule that teachers’ tenure rights were unconstitutional. *The American Prospect* [writes](#) that the *Vergara v. California* case that led to the ruling has been bankrolled by billionaires, and shows that if you have enough money, and an ideological grudge, you can engage in ‘destructive acts of political theatre’.

The National Football League’s Washington Redskins team has been subject to controversy in recent months, due to accusations that its name is racist. On Wednesday, *Crooks & Liars* [reports](#) that the U.S. Patent Office has cancelled the team name’s trademark registrations, ruling that the name is ‘disparaging to Native Americans’.

And finally...

Outside the Beltway writes on Monday that the parking garage where journalist Bob Woodward met with the ‘Deep Throat’ Watergate informant is to be demolished to make way for a new development.

FreakOutNation [reports](#) on an encounter between Hillary Clinton and a Republican National Committee intern who has been stalking her dressed in a squirrel costume. She gave it a copy of her new book.

The Atlantic [tallies](#) up the cost of items featured in the latest issue of *Vogue*, and calculate that it would cost more than \$340,000 to buy every product featured.

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