

McCarthy's withdrawal shakes up Speaker race, Sanders draws crowds, and guns now outnumber people: US national blog round up for 3 – 9 October

USAPP Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson** looks at the best in political blogging from around the Beltway. Our round-up of state blogs will follow over the weekend.

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President Obama, the Democratic Party, and the GOP

This week the Australian media-magnate, Rupert Murdoch, took a swipe at President Obama by tweeting that if elected, former neurosurgeon, Ben Carson, would be 'a real black president'. *No more mister nice guy* [writes](#) that Murdoch is hardly the first to say that Obama is not really the first black president.

On Thursday, *Wonkblog* [says](#) that this week's White House Summit on Worker Voice is the first time in years that a president has talked a great deal about unions and the labor movement.

Moving on to the Democratic Party more generally, *Political Animal* [comments](#) that the party's reaction to gun politics in the US shows the weaknesses in how it engages with the issues. They say that only when liberal organizations put the same energies into organizing their anti-gun base as the right does with the NRA and those that are pro-gun, will gun control legislation have a chance of passage.

The American Interest this week [comments](#) that the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement between 11 countries and the US exposes the contradictions which they say are at the heart of the American left. They write that while the unions and most leftists will denounce the deal, globally trade agreements such as this reduce inequality between countries and improve the lives of the poor.

After last week's tragic shooting in Oregon, much of the media discourse this week turned to gun control and gun ownership. *American Thinker* [says](#) that gun control is actually conservative control – a political tool to disarm those who will not 'surrender to Marxists and fascists'.

The big news for the GOP this week was House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy's (R-CA) announcement that he was dropping out of the race to succeed John Boehner (R-OH) as speaker of the House of Representatives. *The Fix* [says](#) that McCarthy's move signals a 'full-blown' GOP revolution that is seeing the establishment's hold on power become ever-more tenuous.

Elections and the road to 2016

On Tuesday, *The Atlantic* [looks](#) at the 1,200 'solitary fringe presidential aspirants'. They say that it's very easy to actually run for president – all that's needed is to fill out a few forms – but that it's very hard to get on a state's ballot.

On Wednesday, *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) that the polling company Gallup will not be polling the 2016 primary

paces for either party, citing a 'bruising' 2012 cycle where many of its polls were farther off than its competitors.

Moving now to property billionaire Donald Trump's week in the GOP primary race:



- Trump has only spent \$2 million on his entire campaign so far, compared with former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's more than \$18 million ([The Fix](#)).
- He's also king – at least in a world where being unpleasant on Twitter is 'genius' ([Daily Kos](#)).
- Trump has also made a number of U-turns on the campaign trail, from calling for Syrian refugees to be accepted to saying that they should be sent back, to flip-flopping on Planned Parenthood funding ([The Fix](#)).
- In what may end with another flip flop, Trump came under criticism from conservatives this week after he stated that he supported 'eminent domain' – the right for government to seize property to promote the public good ([The Atlantic](#)).
- Trump is also falling in the polls in a number of states with early primaries, such as Iowa and New Hampshire ([The Fix](#)).

And now on to the week for the remainder of the GOP's presidential primary candidates:

- [The Fix](#) has a [list](#) of what not to say in the wake of mass shootings such as the one in Oregon last week (including Jeb Bush's 'stuff happens' comment),
- Speaking of Bush – should the former Florida Governor be freaking out right now given his low ebb in the polls? ([FiveThirtyEight](#)).
- Bush may be unlikely to win the GOP nomination given his status as an insider ([No more mister nice blog](#)).
- Former Hewlett Packard CEO, Carly Fiorina, reckons that her degree in medieval history has prepared her to be able to deal with ISIS ([Daily Kos](#)).
- Ben Carson suggested this week that the victims of last week's Oregon shootings should have acted more forcefully to prevent the attack ([Post Politics](#)).
- Carson also seemed unsure of the difference between the debt limit and the budget this week ([PoliticusUSA](#)).
- Despite these gaffes, a large number of Americans actually have quite positive feelings about Carson ([No more mister nice blog](#)).
- Texas Senator Ted Cruz has managed to raise \$12.2 million in the last quarter, the second highest sum across the GOP field ([Post Politics](#)).
- Last week we reported on the speculation that Kentucky Senator Rand Paul's campaign may be coming to a close – [PoliticusUSA](#) [says](#) that only 50 people turned up to recent rally in his home state.

Turning now to the Democratic Party's 2016 field:



Credit: Mike Mozart (Creative Commons BY)

- Hillary Clinton showed her sense of humor by appearing on *Saturday Night Live* this week ([The Atlantic](#))...
- ... though *American Thinker* [accuses](#) her of having 'multiple personality disorder' by shifting and changing her identity throughout her political career.
- *Post Politics* meanwhile has the [story](#) that when Clinton's Republican rivals questioned her accomplishments whilst she was Secretary of State, she sent them a copy of her book, 'Hard Choices'.
- Clinton also this week proposed that, if elected, she would close the 'gun show loophole' by executive order – despite that the law already allows for this ([The Federalist](#)).
- *The Fix* [writes](#) that Clinton's U-turn on the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal (she is now against it), shows that she is worried about Bernie Sanders....
- ...though Sanders himself should be [worried](#) about Clinton's stance on gun control, given that the NRA helped him to get elected to Congress.
- Speaking of the Senator from Vermont, *The American Prospect* [says](#) that Sanders is no more radical than Harry Truman was.
- This week, 20,000 people came to see Sanders in Boston – why aren't we talking more about it ([The Fix](#))?
- Is Sanders exaggerating his record on gay rights? ([America Blog](#))
- Former Maryland Governor, Martin O'Malley is polling at a mere 2 percent in his home state, according to a new poll ([Post Politics](#)).
- Vice President Joe Biden's running for president – unless he isn't. ([Political Animal](#)).
- Is Biden running out of time to throw his hat into the presidential ring? ([Hit & Run](#)).
- Does the yearning for Biden reveal a gender bias against Hillary Clinton? ([The American Prospect](#)).

Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda

On Monday this week, *Hit & Run* [profiles three cases](#) that will go before the Supreme Court in its newly started term. These include one on the use of race in university admissions, the right to counsel in criminal prosecutions, and a case on whether or not public school teachers should pay union dues if they are union members or not. As the Supreme Court starts its new term, *Outside the Beltway* has the [news](#) that disapproval for the body is reaching a new high, with half disapproving of the job that it's doing.

In government news, *Red State* [reports](#) on Saturday that the Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, has announced he will be resigning in December. They blame Duncan for damaging educational standards by introducing the Common Core policy.



Congressman Paul Ryan Credit: Gage Skidmore (Creative Commons BY SA)

This week was a turbulent one in the House – though previously expected to win the Speakership election scheduled for Thursday, Wednesday saw the House Freedom Caucus turn against the Majority Leader, Kevin McCarthy, in favor of Representative Daniel Webster (R-FL) [reports *The Federalist*](#). Thursday saw the surprise announcement by McCarthy that he would not be pursuing the Speakership, throwing the House GOP into disarray ([The Daily Signal](#)). In light of McCarthy's withdrawal, [The Fix wonders](#) who will be Speaker. They say that the GOP may have to convince the current head of the Ways and Means Committee, Paul Ryan (R-WI) to run for the job. [FiveThirtyEight says](#) that McCarthy's Speaker bid was doomed because of his split with House conservatives over legislative tactics. [The Federalist](#) reckons we should all relax and remember that [this is exactly how Congress should work](#).

Moving on to the Senate, [Roll Call's Hawkings Here looks](#) at the increasing political isolation of Ted Cruz (R-TX).

Foreign policy, defense and trade

On Wednesday, [Outside the Beltway argues](#) that it's time to take away the power to prosecute for sexual assaults away from military commanders, citing the problem of undue command influence over military jurors.

[The Atlantic writes](#) that the Trans-Pacific Partnership deal, agreed this week, is the largest ever regional trade deal, but also that it is likely to face strong opposition in Congress.

Obamacare and health policy

On Monday, [Wonkblog looks](#) at a new study which shows how racial inequality causes differences in access to high-quality medical care – minorities and the unemployed apparently have to wait 25 percent longer.

[The Daily Signal writes](#) this week that three committees in the House of Representatives are planning to repeal parts of the Affordable Care Act through the process of reconciliation, which only needs 51 votes in the Senate to pass. Staying on Obamacare, [The Fix says](#) that the program mandated better mental health coverage, something which hasn't happened yet, because it has not resolved the disparate way in which many insurers treat the costs of mental health care compared to other types of care.

The economy and society

With the focus once again on gun control, [The Volokh Conspiracy looks](#) at whether citizens with guns ever stop mass shootings, and gives a number of examples where this may have been the case. [Wonkblog](#) has the sobering [news](#) that there are now more guns (357 million) in the US than people (310 million).

This week, [The Atlantic reports](#) that 6,000 federal inmates are to be released at the end of this month after their long sentences were reduced last year. More than 205,000 federal inmates remain.

Daily Kos [writes](#) Sunday that forty years of increasing worker productivity has led to lower wages, with people increasingly working longer hours and not seeing additional compensation for their productivity.

The American Interest [comments](#) this week on how fracking is helping to make the US greener, since shale gas is displacing larger quantities of dirtier-burning coal.

The Atlantic [asks](#), should those who immigrate to the US be required to assimilate?

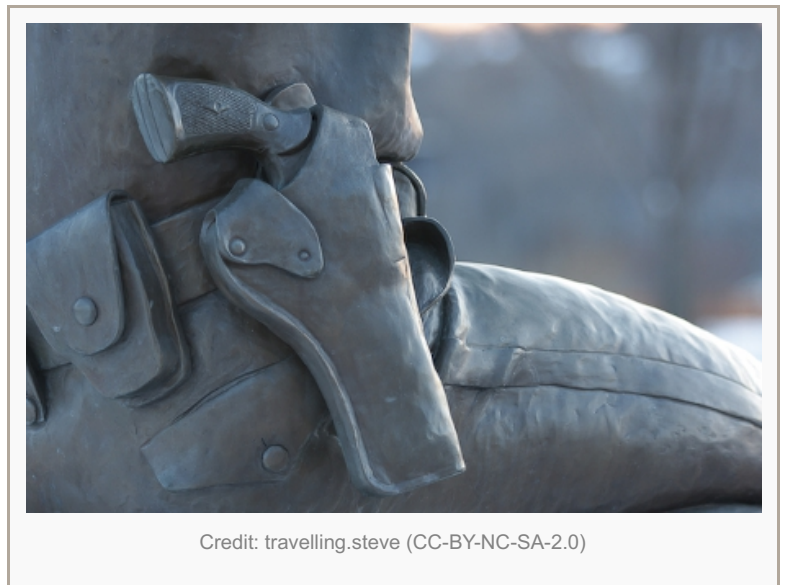
And finally...

Fancy a cheap book? The Library of Congress is having a clear out ([Roll Call's Heard on the Hill](#)).

The US has the vast majority of guns in the world – by a large degree ([Occasional Planet](#)).

Despite the imbroglio over the Speakership in Congress this week, the vast majority of people have never been able to even name the Speaker ([The Fix](#)).

Featured image: House Majority Leader, Kevin McCarthy Credit: [Talk Radio News Service](#) (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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