



WEEKLY UPDATE

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Christie's Bridge Scandal

Over the past few months, Chris Christie has been embroiled in a scandal over accusations that his Administration sought retribution against the Mayor of Fort Lee by shutting down lanes on the George Washington Bridge—the busiest bridge in the world—for a “traffic study” to punish the Democratic mayor who didn’t endorse Chris Christie’s reelection bid.

That scandal reached new heights on Wednesday when [emails and text messages surfaced](#) showing members of Christie’s inner circle did know, and orchestrated the retribution.

On Thursday, Chris Christie spent nearly two hours making himself out to be the victim, instead of those stuck in traffic including first responders, and denying any knowledge of the bridge scandal.

The DNC has spent the past few months working to explain the scandal and reveal the truth while Governor Christie chose and laugh off and belittle those who questioned him. Click on the videos below to see the DNC’s progression through the scandal with key web clips.



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Republican leadership rejects unemployment insurance extension, ignores constituents

Despite the opposition of the majority of Republicans, the Senate took the first step to extend unemployment insurance benefits for millions of Americans while they look for work. Across the country, American families need and rely on this vital lifeline, and experts agree that this extension is in the best interest of the economy - but still, the majority of Republican in the Senate voted no.

For these Republicans, including those considering presidential runs in 2016, Tuesday's vote was yet another example of their failure to support policies that grow the middle class. They oppose increasing the minimum wage, they want to repeal the Affordable Care Act which expands Medicaid, and they went so far as shutting down the government costing our economy \$24 billion.

Watch the DNC's new video questioning Paul, Cruz, and Rubio on why they refuse to help their constituents, [here](#).



President Obama calls on Congressional Republicans to extend emergency unemployment insurance

On Tuesday, President Obama called on Congressional Republicans to extend unemployment insurance for the 1.3 million Americans who lost it last week because of Congress' inaction.

Speaking from the White House he said, "For a lot of people, [unemployment insurance is] the only source of income they've got to support their families while they look for a new job. These aren't folks who are just sitting back waiting for things to happen. They're out there actively looking for work. They desperately want work."

He continued discussing the need to extended assistance for those long-term unemployed among us saying, "this insurance helps keep food on the table while Dad is sending out résumés. It helps Mom pay the rent while she's learning new skills to earn that new job. It provides that extra bit of security so that losing your job doesn't mean that you have to lose your house, or everything you've worked so hard to build for years. We make this promise to our fellow Americans who are working hard to get back on their feet, because when times get tough, we are not a people who say, you're on your own. We're a people who believe that we're all in it together."

He finished by explaining what Congress can do, "We're going to have to see action, though, on the part of Congress. And I'll be willing to work with them every step of the way -- action to help our businesses create more of the good jobs that a growing middle class requires; action to restore economic mobility and reduce inequality; action to open more doors of opportunity for everybody who is willing to work hard and walk through those doors."

Read the President's full remarks [here](#).

Three years later: Remembering Tucson

Wednesday marked the third anniversary of the tragic Tucson, AZ shooting, where six were killed and thirteen wounded, including Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords.

To mark the anniversary, Giffords went sky diving to recognize, "I'm alive."

View Giffords' interview with Savannah Guthrie right after she takes the leap, [here](#).

To recognize the anniversary, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz published the op-ed below in USA Today calling on action to protect others from gun violence.

Curb gun violence for Gabby **USA Today// Rep. Wasserman Schultz**

Three years ago today, a man approached a crowd in the parking lot of a Tucson, Arizona, supermarket and began shooting. Six people were killed, including one child, and 13 were wounded, including his main target, my dear friend, Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords.



Giffords, flying above the Tucson desert, jumped in tandem with a Navy Seal.

I'll never forget where I was when I first heard the news. I was driving my daughter to her soccer game when I got an email that Gabby had been shot. On that day, the all too familiar tragedy unfolding on TV was personal, one of my closest friends was a victim of intentional violence.

When tragedy struck, Gabby was doing what she loved -- talking with her constituents at one of her "Congress on Your Corner" events. Over the last three years, she has inspired all of us with her unshakable optimism and unending courage as she works hard on her recovery. I couldn't be more proud.

Since that tragic day in Tucson, we have seen similar violence in towns and cities across the country, in movie theaters, places of worship, and our children's schools. And each time I remember how I felt on that January day, I remember the helplessness I felt, the anger, and the conviction that I would do everything in my power to prevent others from ever feeling the way I did -- the way most of us do when we hear of another preventable tragedy.

As we pause and reflect on that bleak day in 2011, we also know that our memories and our tears are not enough -- we need action. We can and we must do more so that tragedies like these are far less common.

President Obama has met with survivors and grieved with the families of victims, and has repeatedly made clear that we need common sense reforms to reduce gun violence. And as Democrats, we have worked hard to try to make reforms, like universal background checks, a reality. It's clear that we have not made nearly enough progress, but we will not stop fighting.

This is a personal mission for me not just as Gabby's friend, but also as the Chair of the Democratic Party, as a member of Congress and as a mother of three young children.

The vast majority of Americans agree with President Obama and Democrats that we should require background checks for all gun sales and the majority of Americans also support banning sales of military-style assault weapons. These weapons simply don't belong on our streets.

In the wake of the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary, we appeared to have the momentum needed to pass reforms that would curb gun violence. Sadly, it was not enough to overcome the strong influence of special interest groups like the National Rifle Association who favor the status quo, and whose pockets are lined by profits from gun sales. There is no doubt that gun safety will continue to be a challenge for us as lawmakers, but it is our responsibility as elected leaders to stand up for our constituents, to keep them safe, and to do what is right.

In 2013, more than 11,000 people in America were killed by guns -- this should shock all Americans and is simply unacceptable. President Obama has shown leadership – including just last week when the administration introduced new executive actions, giving clarity to states about information that can be shared with the appropriate authorities regarding mentally ill individuals. However, executive actions cannot replace the need for comprehensive legislation. Ultimately, Congress must act.

I believe there is a way for us to work together, as Democrats and Republicans, to balance our right to bear arms with the right to be safe in our communities. It won't be easy, but nothing worth doing ever is. This is my hope for the new year. We owe it to all the victims of senseless gun violence, to find a way to create a safer future for the next generation.

We should follow the advice of my friend Gabby, who spoke last year imploring lawmakers, "Too many children are dying...You must act. Be bold. Be courageous. Americans are counting on you."

President Obama introduces the first five "Promise Zones"

On Thursday, President Obama marked Wednesday's 50th Anniversary of the War on Poverty by announcing the first five "Promise Zones" across the country.

The Zones, located in San Antonio, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Southeastern Kentucky, and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, have all committed to working with the President's Administration to help create jobs, increase economic security, expand educational opportunities, expand affordable housing, and improve public safety.



In his announcement the President said, "We call these communities Promise Zones. They're neighborhoods where we will help local efforts to meet one national goal -- that a child's course in life should be determined not by the zip code she's born in, but by the strength of her work ethic and the scope of her dreams."

Watch the President's announcement [here](#).

Republican Governors put politics over people

Millions of Americans stand to benefit from the expansion of Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act, yet several Republican governors are standing in the way of that expansion or instituting other roadblocks to affordable coverage. Now, editorial boards, opinion pages, and news coverage in states across the country are asking these Republican governors to stop putting their politics over the people they work for.

Here are some highlights:

Wichita Eagle: "One of the biggest policy failures of the past year was that Gov. Sam Brownback and the Legislature refused to allow a federal expansion of Medicaid in Kansas."

New Orleans Times-Picayune: "Gov. Jindal has remained stubbornly opposed to the Medicaid expansion, despite the benefits to Louisiana residents and to the state's economy."

Fort Worth Star-Telegram: "Republican elected officials, including Texas Gov. Rick Perry, have thrown up roadblocks from the beginning with a misinformation campaign, refusal to create state insurance exchanges and, more recently, deliberately hampering a federally funded program to help people sign up for insurance under the ACA."

See more here:

Utah – Gov. Herbert

[My View: Utah needs to expand Medicaid](#)
Deseret News // Tom Metcalf, Op-Ed

Wyoming – Gov. Mead

[Listen to the Voice of Compassion on Medicaid](#)
Casper Star Tribune // Chesie Lee, Op-Ed

Idaho – Gov. Otter

[Medicaid expansion would benefit Idaho veterans](#)
The Spokesman Review // Betsy Z. Russell

Alaska – Gov. Parnell

[Compass: Alaska can only gain by Medicaid expansion](#)
Anchorage Daily News // John Riley, Op-Ed

Kansas – Gov. Brownback

[Hope for Medicaid expansion?](#)
Wichita Eagle // Editorial

Louisiana – Gov. Jindal

[Medicaid expansion kicks off, but Louisiana residents being left out](#)
New Orleans Times-Picayune // Editorial

Indiana – Gov. Pence

[Pence makes a point; Hoosier health suffers](#)
Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette // Marvin Ross, Op-Ed

Wisconsin – Gov. Walker

[Wisconsin's rejection of Medicaid money will cost the state \\$1.8 billion in 2022](#)
The Cap Times // Steven Elbow, Editorial

Texas – Gov. Perry

[Perry, TDI should remove roadblocks to Obamacare](#)
Fort Worth Star-Telegram // Editorial