

Current Articles and Research Resources, February 22

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In this weekly post, we feature helpful research tools and recent articles of interest to the legislative community.

- Examine [criminal history](#) information systems by state. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, January 2018)
- Review the country's [economic progress](#) during the first year of the Trump administration. (Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, February 2018)
- See how the United States ranks against other top ten [best countries](#). (U.S. News & World Report, ©2018)
- Track [approval ratings](#) by state for President Trump. (Morning Consult, February 1, 2018)

Members of the Texas legislative community may request the articles below [here](#) or by calling 512-463-1252.

- "[America is not a democracy](#)." By Yascha Mbunk. *Atlantic Monthly*, March 2018, pp. 80-87.
Explains that the preferences of a majority of Americans are not reflected in public policy on many issues. Recommends various reforms such as better pay for Congressional staff to attract more expertise, stronger conflict of interest rules, and changes to campaign finance laws.
- "UT-Austin professors join campaign against productivity company." By Paul Basken. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 2, 2018, p. A21.
Highlights concerns University of Texas at Austin professors have regarding the data company, Academic Analytics, and use of the company's analysis to determine promotions, tenure, and other faculty issues.
- "Amazon's search for HQ2." *Dallas Business Journal*, February 9, 2018, pp. 13-15.
Projects the top contenders among the twenty finalists for Amazon's second headquarters.
- "Charities and tax in America: mass deduction" *Economist*, February 17th-23rd, 2018, pp. 64-65.
Reports recent tax reforms in America will hurt some charities more than others.
- "Regulation: how to rig an economy." *Economist*, February 17th-23rd, 2018, pp. 25-26.
Advocates against unnecessary licensing, noting occupational regulations' potential to chill competition and boost inequality.
- "Tax abatement agreements and taxpayer bankruptcies." By Dennis Rimkunas and L. Matthew Waterhouse. *Journal of MultiState Taxation and Incentives*, February 2018, pp. 6-13.
Reviews the adoption and enforceability of *ipso facto* clauses in tax abatement agreements and the procedures when it comes to a taxpayer's bankruptcy. Highlights the requirements of Texas' tax abatement agreements to reduce property taxes in Texas Tax Code Chapter 312.
Related information

at: <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/TX/htm/TX.312.htm>

- "Reasons for electronic cigarette use among middle and high school students — National Youth Tobacco Survey, United States, 2016." By James Tsai, et al. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, February 16, 2018, pp. 196-200.

Surveys adolescents to understand better why electronic cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among the age group. Reports that the most common answers were use by friends or family, the availability of sweet flavors, and the belief that e-cigarettes are less harmful than other forms of tobacco.

- "Real choices, real savings: keeping the lights on for low-income customers" By Jessica Porter. *Public Power*, January/February 2018, pp. 8-13. Highlights public power programs created to assist low-income customers.
- "Renewables are cheaper than the existing grid (which is cheaper than renewables): central vs. local supply." By Charles Bayless. *Public Utilities Fortnightly*, February 2018, pp. 38-31, 67. Compares the costs of renewable energy to energy derived from the existing electric grids. Discusses costs associated with connecting renewable energy sources to the existing electric grids.
- "Talking Texas markets, part 1." *Public Utilities Fortnightly*, February 2018, pp. 28-33, 75. Features part one of a conversation between the editor-in-chief of *Public Utilities Fortnightly* and four leaders from the energy industry in Texas.
- "America's secret death penalty drugs." By C.J. Ciaramella. *Reason*, March 2018, p. 10. Highlights the tactics and laws various states employ to keep secret the drug sources and methods used for death penalty lethal injection.
- "An unequal right to bear arms: state weapons laws and white supremacy in Texas, 1836-1900." By Brennan Gardner Rivas. *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, January 2018, pp. 284-303. Describes the prominent role of firearms in Texas culture and the history of early gun legislation dating to the Republic of Texas.
- "Supreme Court weighs in on WOTUS challenges." By Jessica Domel. *Texas Agriculture*, February 2, 2018, p. 8. Reviews the United States Supreme Court's ruling that federal district courts — rather than federal appeals courts — have jurisdiction to review the Environmental Protection Agency's WOTUS [Waters of the United States] rule. Points out that district courts provide landowners with a better venue to have their cases heard.

Related information

at: https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/17pdf/16-299_8nkO.pdf

- "PUC concerned about direct current [DC] ties to Mexico." *Texas Public Power*, January 2018, pp. 5, 7.

Mentions recent measures taken by the Public Utilities Commission [PUC] to address their concern about the Electric Reliability Council Of Texas' [ERCOT] jurisdictional relationship to electric power-related entities outside of the state.

Related information

at: <http://www.ercot.com/mktrules/issues/NPRR861#keydocs>

- "Tax bill keeps tax exemption for municipal bonds." *Texas Public Power*, January 2018, p. 3. Provides an update regarding the recently passed tax bill and its effect on municipal bonds.

Related information

at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1>

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