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 Mounk. 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.
- "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.
- "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
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.


"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.

Features part one of a conversation between the editor-in-chief of Public Utilities Fortnightly and four leaders from the energy industry in Texas.

Highlights the tactics and laws various states employ to keep secret the drug sources and methods used for death penalty lethal injection.

Describes the prominent role of firearms in Texas culture and the history of early gun legislation dating to the Republic of Texas.

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_8nk0.pdf

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

The Legislative Reference Library compiles this weekly annotated list of Current Articles of interest to the legislative community. Professional librarians review and select articles from more than 300 periodicals, including public policy journals, specialized industry periodicals, news magazines, and state agency publications. Members of the Texas legislative community may request articles using our online form.