

## Current Articles & Research Resources, March 7

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

- Consider the [costs](#) states bear in the wake of natural disasters. (National Conference of State Legislatures, February 25, 2019)
- Explore the [demographics](#) of the United States Congress. (Brookings, March 4, 2019)
- Find out who buys and sells your [personal data](#). (Fast Company, March 2, 2019)
- Track pedestrian traffic [fatalities](#) by state. (Governors Highway Safety Association, February 2019)

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

- "A new 'caravan' enters Mexico, a different welcome awaits." By Louisa Reynolds. *Christian Science Monitor*, February 11, 2019, p. 10.  
Profiles Mexico's new immigration policy allowing Central Americans to request a renewable one-year humanitarian visa. Explains the visa allows free movement and formal employment, and estimates 40 percent of those traveling with previous caravans requested asylum in Mexico.
- "The new 'in loco parentis'." By Vimal Patel. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 22, 2019, pp. B35-B36, B38-B39.  
Considers the changing philosophy of *in loco parentis*, the idea that colleges should act "in the place of the parent," in their responsibility for students. Provides a sidebar highlighting court cases that have led to changing views.
- "The rise of the mega-university." By Lee Gardner. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 22, 2019, pp. B28-B30, B32.  
Explores the role of large nonprofit, online institutions, such as Western Governors University, and explains how they are influencing higher education.
- "Beer-to-go could get go-ahead." By Kimberly Reeves. *Dallas Business Journal*, February 22, 2019, p. 2.  
Comments on [SB312](#) and [HB672](#), 86th Legislature, legislation that would permit craft breweries to sell beer-to-go at their manufacturing facilities. Includes comments by Senator Dawn Buckingham and Representative Eddie Rodriguez.
- "State environmental regulator goes to bat for faster emissions permitting." By Kimberly Reeves. *Dallas Business Journal*, March 1, 2019, p. 2.  
Reports the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality commissioner is seeking to close a funding gap in the state's expedited process for air permits, urging legislators to double the state's funding to \$2.14 million.
- "Opioids: The death curve." *Economist*, February 23rd-March 1st, 2019, pp. 21-23.  
Reviews the origins of the opioid crisis, charts the overdose rate since 1980, and comments on the slow and inadequate federal response to the crisis. Estimates

the epidemic will continue for five to ten years, killing 50,000 people each year.

- "Resisting the allure of gross receipts taxes: An assessment of their costs and consequences." By Garrett Watson. *Fiscal Fact (Tax Foundation)*, February 2019, pp. 1-18.  
Discusses the history, increasing popularity, and economic impact of gross receipts taxes on businesses. Describes the complexity of Texas' margin tax.
- "Health care spending slowed after Rhode Island applied affordability standards to commercial insurers." By Aaron Baum, et al. *Health Affairs*, February 2019, pp. 237-245.  
Offers Rhode Island as a case study of a state that has successfully slowed total commercial health care spending growth, while maintaining quality, through setting price controls on contracts between commercial insurers and hospitals and clinics.
- "What businesses will lobby for at the Texas Capitol in 2019." *Houston Business Journal*, January 31, 2019, pp. 18-19.  
Examines key issues that business leaders will seek to address during the legislative session. Highlights Houston area and state-wide legislation that covers property tax reform, business incentive programs, and the minimum wage.
- "How to survive a death crisis." By Maia Szalavitz. *Nation*, March 11/18, 2019, pp. 16-21.  
Discusses a "harm reduction" approach to the opioid crisis and notes overdose is now the leading cause of death for adults under 50 in the United States.
- "Public pension plan investment return assumptions (2019)." *National Association of State Retirement Administrators*, Updated February 2019, pp. 1-8.  
Describes how investment return assumptions are established and evaluated in public pension funds, compared with public funds' actual investment experience. Includes Texas County & District, Texas ERS, Texas LECOS, Texas Municipal, and Texas Teachers in the appendix. Related information at: <https://www.nasra.org/latestreturnassumptions>.
- "A 2-week weather forecast may be as good as it gets." By Paul Voosen. *Science*, February 22, 2019, p. 801.  
Explains why there are limits to global weather prediction models that prevent accurate forecasts from looking farther ahead than two weeks.
- "The weather amplifier." By Michael E. Mann. *Scientific American*, March 2019, pp. 42-49.  
Considers how unusual patterns in the jet stream affect weather events in the United States.
- "Farmers hope for hemp riches despite risks." By April Simpson. *Stateline (Pew Charitable Trusts)*, February 27, 2019, pp. 1-9.  
Highlights Kentucky's highly regulated approach in developing the state's industrialized hemp sector. Notes Texas is among states that have not enacted legislation to establish industrial hemp cultivation.
- "Bills seek more transparency, fairness in eminent domain cases." By Julie Tomascik. *Texas Agriculture*, February 1, 2019, p. 16.  
Highlights [SB421](#) and [HB991](#), 86th Legislature, bills that could change how private entities with eminent domain authority must negotiate with landowners to acquire property before turning to condemnation.
- "The future of the death penalty: The seeds of time." By John Charles Boger. *Texas Tech Law Review*, Fall 2018, pp. 75-94.  
Considers recent treatment of the death penalty by members of the current United States Supreme Court.

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