

## Current Articles & Research Resources, April 11

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

- Read about proposed legislation in Congress that would prohibit the IRS from offering free [tax filing](#) online. (ProPublica, April 9, 2019)
- Consider [work zone](#) safety on Texas roads. (Texas Department of Transportation, April 8, 2019)
- Beware of phone [scammers](#) after your personal information. (Texas Health & Human Services, April 9, 2019)
- See how well your [science knowledge](#) stacks up against other Americans. (Pew Research Center, March 28, 2019)

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

- "Dismal grades." By Lorelei Laird. *ABA Journal: The Lawyer's Magazine*, April 2019, pp. 18-19.  
Reports the advent of legislatively-mandated school performance standards is helping school finance litigation plaintiffs convince courts that states aren't giving school districts the funding necessary to meet those standards.
- "Do ecosystems have rights?" By Amanda Paulson and Henry Gass. *Christian Science Monitor*, April 1, 2019, pp. 16-17.  
Considers the rights-of-nature movement as embodied in the "Lake Erie Bill of Rights" recently passed by voters in Toledo, Ohio. Reviews the various legal principles that might be used to interpret such rights.
- "Admissions officers didn't cause the scandal. But they helped shape the culture that spawned it." By Eric Hoover. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 22, 2019, pp. A10-A11.  
Explains the recent college admission scandal uncovered the wealth and privilege that have long been a part of college admission issues in setting up unfair advantages for higher-income students. Suggests this is an opportunity for colleges to examine more rigorously the inequities in current processes and procedures.
- "Why thousands of college grads start their careers at a rental-car-company." By Beckie Supiano. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 15, 2019, pp. A10-A12, A14.  
Profiles the management-training program at Enterprise Rent-A-Car and its requirement that candidates have a bachelor's degree. Explains the company sees degree completion as evidence of competencies necessary to succeed in an entry-level job and move up.
- "Joint resolution." By Jennifer Shutt. *CQ Weekly*, March 4, 2019, pp. 16-22.  
Discusses federal legislation to loosen the nation's marijuana laws and the unlikely coalition of lawmakers behind the effort for change. Addresses the

growing acceptance of marijuana use, the disparities between federal and state laws, and the outlook for changing marijuana policy.

- "Hanging with the anti-vaxxers: Sharp exchanges." *Economist*, March 30th-April 5th, 2019, pp. 34, 36.  
Considers how the pro-vaccine camp can respond effectively to those who oppose vaccines. Notes the growing influence of vaccine-choice political action committees.
- "Fairness matters: A chart book on who pays state and local taxes." *Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy*, March 2019, pp. 1-18.  
Analyzes the distribution of state and local taxes and the adequacy of tax systems to fund schools, health care, infrastructure, and other public services. Illustrates the tax burden in sales tax-reliant systems, especially for low- and moderate-income families. Includes Texas. (Related document at: <https://itep.org/whopays/>).
- "Why do hundreds of US women die annually in childbirth?" By Anita Slomski. *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)*, April 2, 2019, pp. 1239-1241.  
Investigates rising maternal mortality rates in the United States and underlying causes of pregnancy-related deaths. Reports 60 percent of maternal deaths are preventable and the leading cause of death varies significantly by race.
- "The short-term forecast for the US economy." By M Ray Perryman. *Perryman Report and Texas Letter*, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 1-3, 6.  
Highlights the latest forecast for the economy over the 2018 to 2023 period.
- "Lower oil prices, tight labor markets to restrain Texas growth in 2019." By Keith R. Phillips and Judy Teng. *Southwest Economy* (Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas), First Quarter 2019, pp. 10-13.  
Presents an economic forecast of the Texas energy, manufacturing, and construction sectors for 2019.
- "The final word: Dennis Bonnen." By Jane Carroll Andrade. *State Legislatures*, March/April 2019, pp. 37.  
Interviews Texas House Speaker Dennis Bonnen.
- "An analysis of Texas jail bookings: How Texas counties could save millions of dollars by safely diverting people from jail." Appendix. *Texas Appleseed*, April 2, 2019, pp. 1-11.  
Analyzes jail booking records from large Texas counties (Bell, Collin, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Bend, Galveston, Hidalgo, Jefferson, McLennan, Montgomery, Tarrant, and Travis), to describe who is being booked into jail, on what charges, and how long they are staying. Addresses how counties could safely reduce jail populations.
- "Time and treasure: Faith-based response to Hurricane Harvey." By Noah Westfall, Erica Nelson and Bee Mborhead. *Texas Interfaith Center for Public Policy*, March 10, 2019, pp. 1-10.  
Highlights the role of faith-based communities in Hurricane Harvey disaster response and recovery. Advocates a public/private collaboration for disaster response in Texas that would ensure financial accountability and transparency.
- "Borders without enough doctors." By Sean Price. *Texas Medicine*, April 2019, pp. 30-37.  
Profiles El Paso physicians who volunteer their time to provide medical care for asylum-seekers along the Texas border. Reports their goal is to build a nationwide network of volunteer doctors.
- "Goodbye to an aquifer." By Brantley Hargrove. *Texas Monthly*, April 2019, pp. 90-102.

Discusses the effects of recent drought and population increase on the Trinity Aquifer and the availability of groundwater in Bell County and Williamson County. Contrasts the work of the Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District in Bell County and the lack of a groundwater conservation district in Williamson County. Mentions [HB1594](#), 86th Legislature.

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