

## Current Articles & Research Resources, February 21

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

- Track how canceled hearings during the partial federal government shutdown affected the **workload** of immigration courts. (Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Syracuse University, February 19, 2019)
- Consider ways to address **internet privacy** and consumer protection related to internet privacy concerns. (U.S. Government Accountability Office, January 2019)
- See state-by-state legislation intended to streamline the deploy of **5G** mobile technology. (National Conference of State Legislatures, February 15, 2019)
- Read about programs in some states that incorporate **professional foster parents** into their foster care systems to provide care to special needs children. (Stateline, February 20, 2019)

Members of the Texas legislative community may request the articles below **here** or by calling 512-463-1252.

- "Texas Enterprise Fund under the microscope." By Daniel Salazar. *Austin Business Journal*, February 8, 2019, p. 12.  
Highlights recent **study** that raises transparency concerns regarding the Texas Enterprise Fund, the state's economic development incentive program.
- "**How states use funds under the TANF block grant**." By Liz Schott, Ife Floyd, and Ashley Burnside. *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, Updated February 19, 2019, pp. 1-20.  
Finds states spent only about half of their Temporary Assistance to Needy Families [TANF] funds in fiscal year 2017 on the core welfare reform areas of basic assistance, child care for low-income families, and work supports. Includes several state tables on TANF spending and includes Texas in a discussion of black families' experience with basic assistance.
- "The labour market: True colours." *Economist*, February 16th-22nd, 2019, pp. 62-63.  
Explains how occupational segregation affects earnings and the gender pay gap.
- "The safety-net: The Arkansas experiment." *Economist*, February 16th-22nd, 2019, pp. 23-24.  
Examines the preliminary results of Arkansas' experiment imposing extensive work requirements on Medicaid recipients. Notes 18,000 people lost their health insurance, due in part to widespread confusion over program requirements and lack of Internet access to submit reports that could only be filed online.
- "Are states poised to tackle outdated K-12 funding formulas?" By Daarel Burnette II. *Education Week*, February 13, 2019, pp. 22-23.  
Argues the political climate is right for states to revamp their outdated and inefficient school funding formulas. Highlights the plans of eight states, including Texas, for improving their school funding systems.

- "Teachers missing out on flood of K-12 cash." By Daarel Burnette II. *Education Week*, January 23, 2019, pp. 1, 17.  
Addresses states' efforts to fund teacher pay increases and the challenges encountered. Reports funding is often siphoned away to competing priorities at the district level. Highlights recent teacher salary legislation in Texas.
- "The best cyber offense is a good cyber defense." By Jackie Benton. *Fiscal Notes*, February 2019, p. 1.  
Examines training of cybersecurity specialists. Notes eighteen colleges and universities in Texas, including The University of Texas at El Paso, The University of Texas at Dallas, and Texas A&M University - San Antonio, have partnered with the National Security Agency to be national centers for cyber defense education.
- "Texas' public pensions: Growing liabilities could affect state finances." By Spencer Grubbs and Amanda Williams. *Fiscal Notes*, February 2019, pp. 1, 3-7.  
Examines how government pension plans work in general and compares defined benefit [DB], defined contribution [DC], and hybrid plans, with survey of hybrid retirement plans in other states. Discusses the financial health and funded ratios of the seven statewide public pension systems in Texas, specifically the Teacher Retirement System and Employees Retirement System.
- "Opportunity Zones: A different zone opportunity." By Diane Lupke. *Journal of MultiState Taxation and Incentives*, February 2019, pp. 22-23, 44.  
Compares the new federal Opportunity Zones program, established in the 2017 *Tax Cuts and Job Act*, with previous zone-style programs and investment vehicles. Looks at early investor activity in Opportunity Zones in Louisville, Kentucky, and the state of Indiana.
- "Pay attention to this little-noticed opioid lawsuit in Oklahoma." By Christine Vestal. *Stateline (Pew Charitable Trusts)*, February 14, 2019, pp. 1-9.  
Highlights *Oklahoma lawsuit* alleging drug companies misrepresented the benefits and addictive qualities of opioid drugs. Suggests the Oklahoma case, scheduled for trial in May 2019, could precipitate a settlement in the consolidated national lawsuit set for trial in October.
- "Not all that is lawful is beneficial: The unintended consequences of ignoring legislative intent." By Jack Walker and Reid Martin. *Texas Lawyer*, March 2019, pp. 20, 22, 24.  
Points out the lack of clarity in the statutory construction of *Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code § 74.153*, standards of proof in cases involving emergency medical care, part of the *Texas Medical Liability Act*. Related information at: <http://www.txcourts.gov/media/1443046/170256.pdf>.
- "All together now." By Sean Price. *Texas Medicine*, February 2019, pp. 22-27.  
Considers how major healthcare mergers, like that proposed by Baylor Scott & White Health and Memorial Hermann, reshape how Texas physicians practice. Asserts that Texas has some of the nation's strictest laws against the corporate practice of medicine, but that the enforcement of these laws has been eroding.
- "Physician-lawmakers outline priorities for 2019 legislature." By David Doolittle. *Texas Medicine*, February 2019, pp. 12-13.  
Summarizes topics addressed by Reps. John Zerwas and Tom Oliverson at the Texas Medical Association's Advocacy Retreat, such as better access to mental health care in schools, reducing maternal deaths, and surprise billing.

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