

Current Articles & Research Resources, August 6

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

- Consider COVID-19's [impact on agriculture](#) in the United States. (The Hill, August 4, 2020)
- Learn how to look for [signs of acute flaccid myelitis](#) (AFM). (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 2020)
- Read about how the Texas Department of State Health Services changed the way COVID-19 fatalities are [counted](#). (Texas Department of State Health Services, July 27, 2020)
- Review the [deadline calendar](#) for the upcoming November 3 general election. (Texas Secretary of State, accessed August 5, 2020)

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

- 20.08.01 / "[Failing grades: States' responses to COVID-19 in jails & prisons](#)." By Emily Widra and Dylan Hayre. *American Civil Liberties Union*, June 25, 2020, pp. 1-20.
Rates state responses to COVID-19 within correctional facilities based upon the availability of testing and personal protective equipment [PPE] for staff and inmates, the reduction in county jail and state prison populations, and the public availability of data on COVID-19 in the state prison system. Notes over 570 incarcerated individuals and over 50 correction staff have died of COVID-19 as of June 22, 2020.
- 20.08.02 / "Economists weigh in on Austin's recovery prospects as pandemic lingers." By Mke Cronin. *Austin Business Journal*, July 31, 2020, pp. A4-A5.
Presents the views of three prominent economists on the long-term resiliency of the Austin and Central Texas economies.
- 20.08.03 / "As a statue falls, Texas Rangers are cast as heroes and villains." By Henry Gass. *Christian Science Monitor*, July 27, 2020, pp. 1-4.
Explores the history of the Texas Rangers in the context of the current focus on racial tensions and law enforcement. Suggests the organization's 2023 bicentennial offers an opportunity to acknowledge its complicated history and move toward a more just and equitable future.
- 20.08.04 / "[Texas' international trade](#)." By David Green and Shannon Halbrook. *Fiscal Notes*, June/July, 2020, pp. 1, 3-6.
Explores the benefits of international trade for Texas, the role of energy, recent controversies over tariffs and trade agreements, and the long-term international outlook.
- 20.08.05 / "[Mental health and substance use state fact sheets](#)." *Henry J. Kaiser Foundation*, July 10, 2020, pp. 1-18.
Summarizes national data on mental health from a number of sources before and

during the coronavirus pandemic. Provides links to state-level fact sheets with statistics on the prevalence of mental illness and substance use, related deaths, access to treatment, affordability, and costs of care. Includes a link to the [fact sheet for Texas](#).

- 20.08.06 / "[Cost-of-living adjustments](#)." *National Association of State Retirement Administrators*, June 2020, pp. 1-16.
Discusses periodic cost-of-living adjustments [COLAs] in state and local government pensions, common COLA types and features, COLA costs, and recent changes. Features an appendix of COLA provisions by state, including the Texas County and District Retirement System, Employees Retirement System of Texas, Texas Municipal Retirement System, and Teacher Retirement System of Texas.
- 20.08.07 / "COVID-19 pulls back the mask on America's prison system." By C. J. Ciaramella. *Reason*, August/September 2020, p. 10.
Explains the failed attempts to control the spread of COVID-19 in prisons through policies aimed at reducing incarcerated populations. Summarizes inmate lawsuits related to this issue, including the Texas case, *Valentine v. Collier*, in which the United States Supreme Court ruled against inmates.
- 20.08.08 / "[What a new Supreme Court decision means for Native American sovereignty](#)." By Nora McGreevy. *Smithsonian Magazine*, July 10, 2020, pp. 1-3.
Discusses the impact of *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, a recent United States Supreme Court decision that found, regarding jurisdiction, "much of the eastern half of Oklahoma falls within Native American territory."
- 20.08.09 / "[Legislator profile: Texas Representative Tom Oliverson](#)." By Suzanne Weiss. *State Legislatures*, July 23, 2020, pp. 1-2.
Profiles Representative Tom Oliverson's service as a member of the Texas Legislature, commending his ability to work across party lines and learn about the nuts and bolts of policy.
- 20.08.10 / "State court chief justices pledge reform to boost racial equality and justice in the courts." By Angela Morris. *Texas Lawyer*, July 30, 2020, pp. 1-2.
Reports on a [resolution](#) by the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators which pledges action to eradicate systemic racism and make court systems fairer to people of color. Includes comments by Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Nathan Hecht.
- 20.08.11 / "[Unforeseen circumstances: Contractual obligations during a pandemic](#)." By Rusty Adams. *Tierra Grande*, July 2020, pp. 26-27.
Discusses Texas contract law and whether the "acts of God" or force majeure principles affect contractual obligations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 20.08.12 / "[Child care and feeding young children during the pandemic](#)." By Catherine Kuhns and Gina Adams. *Urban Institute Brief*, July 2020, pp. 1-19.
Points out significant gaps in the extent to which children in child care programs who were receiving meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program [CACFP] were able to continue accessing food during the pandemic when child care programs closed. Offers recommendations to ensure that young children's nutritional needs are met in the current crisis and to build a more resilient system moving forward.

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](#).