

Current Articles & Research Resources, September 19

Posted At : September 19, 2019 3:15 PM | Posted By : TexasLRL

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

- Track [obesity prevalence](#) state by state. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, September 12, 2019)
- Explore the new version of the [Constitution Annotated](#). (Library of Congress, September 16, 2019)
- View [county health data](#) in Texas. (Episcopal Health Foundation, 2019)
- Read about the American [veteran](#) experience. (Pew Research Center, September 10, 2019)

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

- "The state of the future." By Erin Edgemon. *Austin Business Journal*, September 13, 2019, pp. 17-20.
Highlights the Texas Facilities Commission [TFC], the agency that serves as the real estate management and construction group for the state. Points out TFC's role in the Capitol Complex expansion and features an interview with Mke Novak, TFC's executive director.
- "Builders, developers, weigh benefits of balancing, cutting DFW housing rules." By Bill Hethcock. *Dallas Business Journal*, September 6, 2019, pp. 12-15.
Examines the debate between companies seeking to standardize building and land-use regulations across the DFW area and local governments that want the right to control the aesthetics of new development to preserve cities' unique characteristics. Provides overview of [HB2439](#), 86th Legislature.
- "Shootings and gun laws." *Economist*, September 7th-13th, 2019, pp. 27-28.
Highlights research indicating Republican states tend to loosen their gun laws following mass shootings.
- "Quality counts 2019: Grading the states." *Education Week*, September 4, 2019, pp. 1, 8-15.
Provides a comprehensive report card on the United States' K-12 system. Ranks each state based on a range of academic, school finance, and socioeconomic factors.
- "Schools tackle vaping amid new health problems." By Denise R. Superville and Arianna Prothero. *Education Week*, August 23, 2019, pp. 1, 17.
Discusses the health effects of vaping and the different approaches being used by school administrators to stem student vaping.
- "Prescription drug monitoring program mandates: Impact on opioid prescribing and related hospital use." By Hefei Wen, et al. *Health Affairs*, September 2019, pp. 1550-1556.
Reports that state implementation of prescription drug monitoring programs [PDMPs] was associated with reductions in the opioid prescription rate, the

opioid-related inpatient stay rate, and the opioid-related emergency department visit rate. Notes significant Medicaid savings represented in these reductions and advocates for continued attention to PDMPs as a tool in tackling the opioid crisis.

- **"Education policy responses to the opioid crisis."** By Alyssa Rafa. *Internet Resource*, September 9, 2019, pp. 1-6.
Examines the connection between education policy and the opioid crisis. Provides examples of recent state policies and initiatives, including Texas legislation on opioid misuse education in public schools.
- **"Medical use of cannabis in 2019."** By Kevin P. Hill. *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)*, September 10, 2019, pp. 974-975.
Asserts that evidence is lacking that indicates the efficacy of medical cannabis for most conditions for which its use is advocated. Recommends physicians exercise caution when considering cannabis for their patients.
- **"Employee contributions to public pension plans (2019)."** *National Association of State Retirement Administrators*, September 2019, pp. 1-12.
Examines employee contribution plan designs across states, policies, and recent trends. Includes a table of employee contribution rates by state, including the Employees Retirement System of Texas and the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.
- **"Don't legalize prostitution."** By Madeleine Kearns. *National Review*, August 26, 2019, pp. 22, 24, 26-28.
Examines the experiences of different countries with legalized prostitution and profiles some young women working as prostitutes. Suggests legalizing prostitution would not make it safer for those involved and would not have the desired effect of decreasing sex trafficking.
- **"The message of measles."** By Nick Paumgarten. *New Yorker*, September 2, 2019, pp. 38-47.
Explores recent measles outbreaks in the United States, focusing on New York, the first state to pass a vaccination law with a religious exemption. Explains the state removed religious exemptions from the law this summer amid a growing number measles cases and a growing movement of vaccine hesitancy and refusal.
- **"The long-term forecast for the United States economy."** By M Ray Perryman. *Perryman Report and Texas Letter*, Vol. 36, No. 5, pp. 1-3, 6.
Highlights recent trends in global trade controversies as well as expectations for long-term domestic economic performance during the 2018 to 2045 period.
- **"PDK poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools."** *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 2019, pp. K1-K23.
Presents the results of the 51st annual **PDK [Phi Delta Kappan] poll** of the public's attitudes toward public schools. Reports Americans named the lack of financial support for public schools as the biggest problem facing their local schools.
- **"Designing better sugary drink taxes."** By Anna H. Grummon, et al. *Science*, September 6, 2019, pp. 989-990.
Proposes taxing the amount of sugar in a drink per gram instead of taxing by drink volume. Suggests taxing the sugar rather than the drink will encourage consumers to consume drinks with less sugar.
- **"Doctors drive new opioid laws."** By Joey Berlin. *Texas Medicine*, September 2019, pp. 26-28.
Summarizes new laws relating to opioids that will affect physicians' use of prescription monitoring programs [PMPs] and how physicians prescribe controlled substances.

- "Clearing the air on cannabis." By Sean Price. *Texas Medicine*, September 2019, pp. 42-44.
Highlights [HB1325](#) and [HB3703](#), 86th Legislature, which loosen rules on the use of cannabis oil. Considers the possible effects on physicians and health care practice.
- "Passing oral safe harbor: How one nurse's experience changed the law." By Tonya R. Poore. *Texas Nursing*, Summer 2019, pp. 12-13.
Narrates the personal experience of a nurse whose difficulty invoking "safe harbor" — a nursing peer review committee determination — inspired [HB2410](#), 86th Legislature, which expedites the process.
- "The battle to draw the battle lines." By Philip Elliott. *Time*, September 16, 2019, pp. 44-47.
Examines efforts by Democrats to regain control of state legislative chambers in order to shape Congress for the next decade. Considers what Republicans are doing to retain their advantage over congressional redistricting.

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