

Current Articles & Research Resources, April 9

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

- Read about Americans' opinions regarding [postponing presidential primaries](#). (Pew Research Center, April 3, 2020)
- Explore pandemic-related [executive orders](#) by state. (Council of State Governments, accessed April 8, 2020)
- Review state and federal actions to address [student loan debt](#). (National Conference of State Legislatures, April 2020)
- Learn tips to [keep your glasses from fogging up](#) while wearing a face mask. (Fast Company, April 7, 2020)

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

- 20.04.17 / "[CARES Act includes essential measures to respond to public health, economic crises, but more will be needed.](#)" By Sharon Parrott, et al. *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, March 27, 2020, pp. 1-10.
Summarizes the stimulus provisions in the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \[CARES\] Act](#), including expanded unemployment insurance, direct payments to households, and state fiscal relief. Urges future legislation to address health care coverage, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP], and flexible emergency assistance grants.
- 20.04.18 / "[What's in the coronavirus stimulus for youth and family services: Grant-like loans, block grant boosts, and more.](#)" By John Kelly. *Chronicle of Social Change*, April 1, 2020, pp. 1-4.
Discusses key provisions and funding in the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \[CARES\] Act](#) for youth and family services, including increased federal funding for child welfare programs, family violence prevention, child care, community development, and unemployment relief.
- 20.04.19 / "[Believe it or not! In the U.S., no one can be compelled to profess faith as a condition of holding public office.](#)" By Rob Boston. *Church & State*, April 2020, pp. 1-3.
Discusses the ban on religious tests for federal office and the more complicated history for state and local offices.
- 20.04.20 / "[Young Texans: Part 2: Education, training essential in the knowledge economy.](#)" By Jessica Donald, et al. *Fiscal Notes*, March 2020, pp. 6-10.
Explores the workforce development and skills necessary for the under-eighteen population in Texas within the job market. Highlights various statistics on educational attainment by region, within urban and rural areas, and by race and ethnicity.
- 20.04.21 / "[Five ways the criminal justice system could slow the pandemic.](#)"

By Peter Wagner and Emily Widra. *Issue Brief (Prison Policy Institute)*, March 27, 2020, pp. 1-9.

Offers five far-reaching interventions that policymakers can use to slow the spread of COVID-19 in prisons, jails, and broader society.

- 20.04.22 / "[Pandemics and the shape of human history](#)." By Elizabeth Kolbert. *New Yorker*, March 30, 2020, pp. 1-10.
Explores how pandemics have changed the course of history in countries and across regions. Discusses how the need for public health measures increased the power of the modern state. Suggests for all the common patterns of the various pandemics, there are as many variations, and therefore, it is difficult to predict how COVID-19 will compare.
- 20.04.23 / "[Riding the storm: Increasing resiliency for extreme weather events](#)." By Jessica Porter. *Public Power*, March/April 2020, pp. 14-19.
Highlights how two utilities are implementing plans to address infrastructure resiliency due to the increasing threat of natural disasters like hurricanes.
- 20.04.24 / "[Medicaid block grants and per capita caps: The coronavirus highlights risks to states](#)." By John Holahan. *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*, March 2020, pp. 1-7.
Discusses the Healthy Adult Opportunity, which would permit states to apply for a block grant or per capita cap for Medicaid funding in exchange for more flexibility over eligibility and enrollment. Highlights essential issues with block grants and per capita proposals, including the difficulty in establishing an appropriate growth rate. Finds states' desire for flexibility could lead to harmful cuts and result in reductions in coverage and benefits.
- 20.04.25 / "[How epidemics of the past changed the way Americans lived](#)." By Katherine A. Foss. *Smithsonian Magazine*, April 1, 2020, pp. 1-5.
Discusses how responses to diseases and epidemics in the past created permanent changes in society, establishing behaviors and practices we consider to be norms today.
- 20.04.26 / "[Do preschool expulsions need a timeout?](#)" By Jennifer Palmer. *State Legislatures*, March/April 2020, pp. 32-34.
Discusses the challenges associated with addressing children's mental health and the long-term effects of suspensions and expulsions. Highlights Colorado's Early Childhood Mental Health Specialists program.
- 20.04.27 / "[We have no money': Coronavirus slams state taxes](#)." By Sophie Quinton. *Stateline (Pew Charitable Trusts)*, April 2, 2020, pp. 1-4.
Reports rainy-day funds and budget reserves built up over the past decade will not be enough for states to absorb the drop in tax revenues and costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 20.04.28 / "[Evaluating the trade-offs of unemployment compensation changes in the CARES Act](#)." By Taylor LaJoie. *Tax Foundation*, April 2, 2020, pp. 1-4.
Describes provisions to increase unemployment assistance and insurance [UI] to private and public-sector employees in the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \[CARES\] Act](#), Sections 2102-2115 and 3603.
- 20.04.29 / "[Striking a balance: Changes to the Texas Citizens Participation Act](#)." By Laura Lee Prather. *Texas Bar Journal*, April 2020, pp. 238-240.
Reviews changes made to the [Texas Citizens Participation Act](#) by HB2730, 86th Legislature, a bill related to frivolous or retaliatory lawsuits that prevent people from exercising their First Amendment rights.
- 20.04.30 / "[Teachers in a new political landscape](#)." By Andrea Chevalier and Mary E. González. *Texas Education Review*, February 2020, pp. 1-9.

Examines how and why educator involvement in politics recently increased in Texas. Includes discussion of teacher pay reform in the 86th Legislature and perspective from Representative Mary E. González.

- 20.04. 31 / "John Zerwas, MD, honored for service in Texas House." *Texas Medicine*, April 2020, pp. 12-13.
Highlights the career of former Representative John Zerwas, M.D., recipient of the American Medical Association's Dr. Nathan Davis Award for Outstanding Government Service.
- 20.04. 32 / "Lead in Texas water? Texas A&M researchers studying lead in Houston neighborhood's drinking water." By Kathy Wythe. *txH2O*, Winter 2020, pp. 1-4.
Summarizes a pilot study conducted in a small community along the Houston Ship Channel to determine the extent of lead leaching into the supply of drinking water. Provides some information about recent steps the United States Environmental Protection Agency has taken to address this issue.

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