

Current Articles & Research Resources, February 7

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

- Examine school district [funding](#) in Texas. (Urban Institute, January 2019)
- Consider findings that indicate the presence of heavy metals in popular [fruit juices](#). (Consumer Reports, January 30, 2019)
- Explore the Governor's [proposed budget](#) for the 2020-2021 biennium. (Office of the Texas Governor, February 2019)
- See a list of state agencies that are under [Sunset review](#) for the 86th legislative session. (Texas Sunset Advisory Commission, accessed February 6, 2019)

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

- "Trafficking survivors shed an unjust label: 'Criminal'." By Stacy Teicher Khadaroo. *Christian Science Monitor*, January 28, 2019, p. 10. Focuses on the changes taking place in criminal laws, such as prostitution charges and other trafficking-related crimes, so that the trafficking victim is not further harmed and punished.
- "Why Central Americans trek north, despite crackdown at US border." By Whitney Eulich. *Christian Science Monitor*, January 28, 2019, pp. 32-33. Explains that migrants seeking asylum in the United States start the journey without correct information on their chances of being successful. Reports that most Central Americans would prefer to stay in their own country, have tried to relocate within their country, and cross borders only as a last resort.
- "The Methuselah annuity." By Steven Malanga. *City Journal (Manhattan Institute)*, February 4, 2019, pp. 1-3. Explains public employees' life expectancy and mortality rates are placing additional pressure on communities already struggling to meet pension obligations.
- "New Texas Legislature means new casino bills." By Kimberly Reeves. *Dallas Business Journal*, January 25, 2019, p. 2. Reports on the history of gambling and casino bills introduced in past sessions and the likelihood of a gambling-related bill passing in the 86th legislative session. Mentions bills introduced by Representatives Harold Dutton and Joe Deshotel.
- "Combating drones: A new dogfight." *Economist*, January 26th-February 1st, 2019, pp. 69-70. Addresses the dangers posed by close drone encounters and rogue drones used for criminal purposes. Evaluates the state of anti-drone technology.
- "It's time to modernize the Endangered Species Act." By Bryson Wong. *Public Power*, January/February 2019, p. 37. Provides information about recent efforts in Congress to update the *Endangered Species Act*. See proposed rules at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2018-07-25/pdf/2018-15810.pdf>, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2018-07-25/pdf/2018-15811.pdf>, and <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2018-07-25/pdf/2018-15812.pdf>.
- "Locally powered, locally staffed: Workforce for economic development." By Jessica Portner. *Public Power*, January/February 2019, pp. 30-36. Highlights public power utilities, including Austin Energy, that are engaging with their communities through training and education programs.
- "The lingering stench of marijuana prohibition." By Jacob Sullum. *Reason*, March 2019, pp. 32-43. Discusses the lingering effect of marijuana convictions, even in states that have since legalized the marijuana for recreational use. Considers the expungement or sealing of these criminal records and highlights the variety of remedies offered by the states where the drug is now legal.
- "The Census: Get ready to enumerate." By Patrick Potyondy. *State Legislatures*, January/February 2019, pp. 28-31. Points out key groups of people who have historically been undercounted in the Census. Notes even a one percent undercount can cost a state a seat in the United States House of Representatives and millions of dollars in federal funding.
- "Municipal courts." By Sherry Statman. *Texas Bar Journal*, February 2019, pp. 104-105. Provides a primer on municipal courts and relates concerns regarding protections for indigent defendants.
- "Value judgement: Property tax ruling ushers in problems, opportunities." By Charles E. Gilliland. *Tierra Grande*, January 2019, pp. 26-28. Discusses implications of *EXLP Leasing Inc. v. Galveston Central Appraisal*, a 2018 Texas Supreme Court decision on property taxes. Speculates the ruling could lead to legislative measures that would undermine the integrity of the property tax base but also resolve long-standing issues relating to transportation and utility properties.

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