

Current Articles & Research Resources, August 27

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

- Find resources for [disaster relief and assistance](#) in Texas. (Texas Department of Housing and Community Development, accessed August 26, 2020)
- Discover how the [United States Postal Service](#) got started. (*Smithsonian Magazine*, August 21, 2020)
- Explore data related to [immigrants](#) in the United States. (Pew Research Center, August 20, 2020)
- Consider how [upcoming elections](#) might be conducted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Cato Institute, August 26, 2020)
- Read about a potential coronavirus [vaccine](#). (Politico, August 26, 2020)

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

- 20.08.44 / "[A road map to reemployment in the COVID-19 economy: Empowering workers, employers, and states.](#)" By Brent Orrell, Mason M Bishop, and John Hawkins. *American Enterprise Institute*, July 2020, pp. 1-18. Discusses reforming the workforce system to support the needs of newly unemployed workers in the competitive job market and uncertain economy that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. Argues for shifting away from federal policies and focusing on flexible state, regional, and local approaches to making decisions and allocating resources.
- 20.08.45 / "[State legislation to declare racism a public health crisis and address institutional racism.](#)" *Association of State and Territorial Health Officials*, August 12, 2020, pp. 1-3. Presents an overview of state-level efforts to declare racism a public health issue, establish political bodies and procedures to assess the disparate impact of current policies on populations of color, and implement policy changes to ensure that future policies are enacted with a racial equity lens.
- 20.08.46 / "[Close the door behind you: How the Texas Supreme Court left the constitutionality of Section 5.014\(b\) open in *In re Geomet Recycling*.](#)" By Tyler Ray Hannusch. *Baylor Law Review*, Spring 2020, pp. 355-369. Discusses the legislative history and recent case law related to [Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code, Section 51.014\(b\)](#), Appeal from Interlocutory Order, in light of the Texas Supreme Court [opinion in *In re Geomet Recycling, LLC*](#). Highlights the implications of the ruling, and argues a future Texas Supreme Court may find Section 51.014(b) unconstitutional.
- 20.08.47 / "[The status of local government pension plans in the midst of COVID-19.](#)" By Jean-Pierre Aubry and Kevin Wandrei. *Center for Retirement Research at Boston College*, August 2020, pp. 1-8. Describes the status of local government pension plans as of fiscal year 2020 and

projections of financial metrics to 2025. Discusses strains on state and local government revenue due to COVID-19 and the potential impact on public pension obligations.

- 20.08.48 / "How Texas policymakers understand and support early childhood brain development: Learnings from a recent survey." By April Wilson, et al. *Child Trends*, August 2020, pp. 1-2.
Highlights a recent survey by Episcopal Health Foundation, partnered with TexProtects and Child Trends, to evaluate Texas state and local policymakers' knowledge of early childhood brain development [ECBD] and which programs policymakers believe have the highest return on investment and the greatest benefits for young children.
- 20.08.49 / "Supporting families and child care providers during the pandemic with a focus on equity." By Sarah Daily and Asiya Kazi. *Child Trends*, August 2020, pp. 1-9.
Explores challenges for families and child care providers during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those disproportionately affected, including young children in low-income households or rural areas and child care providers who have permanently closed. Offers strategies for state and local policymakers to support the accessibility and affordability of child care.
- 20.08.50 / "America's State Department: The dereliction of diplomacy." *Economist*, August 15th-21st, 2020, pp. 52-54.
Discusses the state of American diplomacy. Recommends reforms to the United States Department of State's career structure and the training of foreign service officers.
- 20.08.51 / "Most states require some youth to be on sex offender registries." *Imprint (Formerly Chronicle of Social Change)*, August 16, 2020, p. 1.
Describes a new Juvenile Law Center survey that finds 42 states require youth to register as sex offenders.
- 20.08.52 / "Universal masking to prevent SARS-CoV-2 transmission—The time is now." By John T. Brooks, Jay C. Butler, and Robert R. Redfield. *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)*, August 18, 2020, pp. 635-637.
Examines the community use of face coverings during the COVID-19 pandemic, including new data emphasizing that masking helps prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2. Argues public health officials and leaders need to ensure that the public understands clearly when and how to wear cloth face coverings.
- 20.08.53 / "Mental health, substance use, and suicidal ideation during the COVID-19 pandemic —United States, June 24–30, 2020." By Mark É Czeisler, et al. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, August 14, 2020, pp. 1-9.
Notes considerably elevated adverse mental health conditions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially among younger adults, racial/ethnic minorities, essential workers, and unpaid adult caregivers. Argues the public health response to the pandemic should increase intervention and prevention efforts to address these associated conditions.
- 20.08.54 / "The color of contagion." By Patricia J. Williams. *Nation*, September 7/14, 2020, pp. 22-25.
Describes the racial disparities in COVID-19 mortality rates, prioritization of a national vaccine for certain racial groups and vulnerable populations, and the role of race in previous disease outbreaks. Notes a complaint filed on July 22 by Disability Rights Texas against the North Central Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council, challenging the exclusion of individuals with preexisting conditions and disabilities from intensive care admission.

- 20.08.55 / "[In-person and online learning go together.](#)" By John B. Taylor and Jack Mallery. *Policy Brief (Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research)*, August 2020, pp. 1-6.
Offers solutions to bridging the digital divide in education. Points out the benefits of getting students acclimated to working online.
- 20.08.56 / "[The most powerful instrument: Voting by mail in Texas.](#)" By Joshua Houston and Audrey Balliette. *Texas Interfaith Center for Public Policy*, August 2020, pp. 1-24.
Presents a brief history of voting by mail and details the legislative history of absentee balloting and voting by mail in Texas. Discusses the advantages and disadvantages of voting by mail and the challenges caused by COVID-19.
- 20.08.57 / "[From boom to bloodbath.](#)" By Justin Miller. *Texas Observer*, July 27, 2020, pp. 1-9.
Examines the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the oil and gas industry and the renewable energy sector in Texas and discusses related legislation. Mentions Representatives Rafael Anchia, Terry Canales, Brooks Landgraf, and Erin Zwiener.
- 20.08.58 / "When COVID-19 doesn't go away." By Jaime Ducharme. *Time*, August 31, 2020, pp. 1-4.
Describes the devastating health and economic consequences "long-haul" COVID-19 patients face. Addresses the challenges of treating patients with long-term symptoms.

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