

Current Articles and Research Resources, December 14

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

- Review statistics related to the country's [southern border](#). (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, December 5, 2017)
- Read about the costs of the Trump Administration's [goals for the military](#). (Congressional Budget Office, December 4, 2017)
- Consider the legal aspects of [shared parenting](#). (*The Washington Post*, December 11, 2017)
- Explore the stunning [images](#) from the 2017 *National Geographic* Nature Photographer of the Year submissions. (*National Geographic*, ©2017)

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

- "The state of manufacturing." By Evan Hooper. *Dallas Business Journal*, November 24, 2017, pp. 4-6.
Discusses the growth in manufacturing jobs and tracks how North Texas compares to its national and state counterparts.
- "Disaster relief: defrauding the do-gooders." *Economist*, November 25th-December 1st, 2017, pp. 55-56.
Reports countries are becoming more active in seeking to uncover and punish fraud related to humanitarian aid and natural and man-made disasters.
- "Mental health: me, myself and iPhone." *Economist*, November 25th-December 1st, 2017, pp. 26, 28.
Considers whether the current increase in the suicide rate among 15-to-19-year-olds coincides with the rise of social media and the time spent staring at phone screens.
- "Why the Republican tax plans do nothing to help genuine small businesses." By Hunter Blair. *EPI Issue Brief*, November 29, 2017, pp. 1-8.
Rebuts claims that Republican tax plans will help small businesses by lowering top tax rates on "pass-through" income. Explains the relationship between pass-through businesses and small businesses.
See: <http://www.epi.org/files/pdf/138390.pdf>
- "Making a case for sanctuary hospitals." By Altaf Saadi, Sameer Ahmed, and Mitchell H. Katz. *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)*, December 5, 2017, pp. 2079-2080.
Argues that hospitals should develop clear sanctuary policies so community members can seek medical care regardless of their immigration status. Highlights several Texas anecdotes in which patients were targeted by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement [ICE] agents.
- "The success of state newborn screening policies for critical congenital heart disease." By Alex R. Kemper, Wendy K.K. Lam, and Joseph A. Bocchini Jr. *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)*, December 5, 2017, pp. 2087-2088.
Reports that statewide implementation of mandatory newborn screening policies for critical congenital heart disease was associated with a significant decrease in infant cardiac deaths between 2007 and 2013.
- "Electricity or natural gas: which holds the real price advantage?" By Mark Beyer. *Public Utilities Fortnightly*, December 2017, pp. 48-49.
Compares the price advantages of electricity and natural gas.
- "How does innovation impact customers?: no two are alike." By Sheri Givens. *Public Utilities Fortnightly*, November 2017, pp. 16-18.
Considers how innovations impact residential utility customers. Suggests ways for utilities to accommodate innovations based on different customer preferences.
- "For foster care kids, college degrees are elusive." By Teresa Wiltz. *Stateline (Pew Charitable Trusts)*, December 7, 2017, pp. 1-4.
Reports on state programs that help foster care youth get into and through college or vocational school.
See: <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2017/12/07/for-foster-care-kids-college-degrees-are-elusive>
- "More protection for property owners: how TAB influenced policy to protect homeowners during the 85th First Called Special Session." By Eddie Martin. *Texas Builder*, November/December 2017, pp. 23-24.
Discusses efforts of the Texas Association of Builders relating to the home building industry and property rights in the 85th Legislature, 1st C. S., specifically relating to HB7 (tree credits for mitigation fees) and SB6 (annexation).
See: http://www.texasbuilders.org/site/publisher/files/TXBuilder_NovDec17_FINAL.pdf#page=23
- "Overcoming the storm." By Lorraine Urey. *Texas Builder*, November/December 2017, pp. 12-16.
Surveys Hurricane Harvey's damage to Texas homes and describes the main obstacle facing the rebuilding effort: a skilled construction labor shortage. Mentions recent education reform in HB5, 83rd Legislature, R. S., allowing students to earn construction industry or trade certifications.
See: http://www.texasbuilders.org/site/publisher/files/TXBuilder_NovDec17_FINAL.pdf#page=12
- "A slap at employment law?" By W. Gary Fowler. *Texas Lawyer*, December 2017, pp. 24-25.
Comments on recent court decisions concerning the impact of the *Texas Citizens Participation Act* on employment law issues such as defamation and trade secrets. Notes the law was enacted by HB2973, 82nd Legislature, R. S., as a way to prevent lawsuits that deter free speech.
- "Giving up the gavel: after five terms as House speaker, Joe Straus calls it quits." By R.G. Ratcliffe. *Texas Monthly*, December 2017, pp. 54, 56.
Offers Speaker Joe Straus' thoughts on why he decided not to run for reelection, what it takes to achieve success as Speaker, and whether he might be open to running for statewide office.
- "An 87-year-old nun said she was raped in her nursing home. here's why she couldn't sue." By Haley Sweetland Edwards. *Time*, November 27, 2017, pp. 54-59.
Reports an increasing number of nursing homes are requiring incoming residents to sign arbitration agreements as a condition of admission. Notes residents are often unaware they have relinquished their legal rights to have claims of negligence and criminal conduct heard in court. Addresses an arbitration case involving rape.
See: <http://time.com/5027063/87-year-old-nun-said-she-was-raped-in-her-nursing-home/>

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