Current Articles & Research Resources, May 3

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

- Consider maps and data visualizations related to urban issues. (Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, accessed May 2, 2018)
- Explore the U.S. Reports collection of U.S. Supreme Court decisions. (Library of Congress, accessed May 2, 2018)
- Review the Traffic Safety Culture Index for recent insights into driver, cyclist, and pedestrian behaviors. (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, March 2018)
- Read about vectorborne diseases and their prevalence and consequences in the United States. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 1, 2018)

Members of the Texas legislative community may request the articles below here or by calling 512-463-1252.

- "What if the problem isn't the president, it's the presidency?" By John Dickerson. *Atlantic Monthly*, May 2018, pp. 46-52, 55-63.
  Argues that the role and duties of the United States President have gotten out of control and beyond the capabilities of one person. Discusses the historical evolution of the president's role and offers specific suggestions for reforming the office.
- "A flood of threats to water systems." By Jacqueline Toth. *CQ Weekly*, April 23, 2018, pp. 22-24.
  Addresses how extreme weather events affect water utilities and their planning efforts. Discusses Houston's vulnerability and the city's current drought conditions in the wake of catastrophic flooding from Hurricane Harvey.
- "Safe, legal and scarce." By Sandhya Raman. *CQ Weekly*, April 9, 2018, pp. 26-29.
  Examines state efforts to regulate abortion clinics. Profiles states with stringent regulations that result in the closing of some clinics.
- "Assisted dying: Alohas and goodbyes." *Economist*, April 28th-May 4th, 2018, p. 28.
  Reports Hawaii is the seventh American jurisdiction to approve an assisted-dying law, modeled on Oregon legislation passed in 1997. Related information at: https://www.deathwithdignity.org/take-action/
- "Innovative population health model associated with reduced emergency department use and inpatient hospitalization." By Donald Wesson, et al. *Health Affairs*, April 2018, pp. 543-550.
  Describes a case study of Baylor Scott & White's partnership with the Dallas Parks and Recreation Department to create a primary care clinic in a city recreation center. Details how improved access to health care, alongside exercise facilities, cooking demonstrations, and other wellness resources, was associated with lower emergency department and inpatient services usage by the center's patients.
- "Reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program." By Howard Kunreuther. *Issues in Science and Technology*, Spring 2018, pp. 37-51.
  Suggests ways to improve the National Flood Insurance Program. Considers how areas subject to floods and hurricanes are prepared for flooding events.
- "State-level community benefit regulation and nonprofit hospitals' provision of community benefits." By Simone R. Singh, et al. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law*, April 2018, pp. 229-269 (Note Length).
  Examines how to design regulations that will encourage nonprofit hospitals to provide enough community benefits to justify their tax exemptions and meet policy makers' goals.
- "Let me tell you how it will be: Tougher property tax exemptions." By Mark R. Adams. *Journal of MultiState Taxation and Incentives*, May 2018, pp. 28-35.
  Describes the financial impact of property tax exemptions held by nonprofits, including hospitals, on municipalities. Discusses state legislative initiatives in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Michigan to amend legal structures around nonprofit charitable organizations and property tax exemptions.
- "Texas surplus lines insurance: Reflections on attitudes, from the capitol to the courthouse." By Andrew Kunau. *Journal of Texas Insurance Law*, Spring 2018, pp. 4-11.
  Highlights legislative changes to the insurance surplus lines market through passage of HB2492 and HB1559, 85th Legislature, R.S. Considers how the 2016 Texas Supreme Court case, *Seger v. Yorkshire Ins. Co. Ltd.*, influenced the recent legislative activity.
- "Public pension plan investment return assumptions (2018)." *National Association of State Retirement Administrators*, Updated February 2018, pp. 1-8.
  Describes how investment return assumptions are established and evaluated in public pension funds, compared with public funds' actual investment experience. Includes Texas County & District, Texas ERS, Texas LECOS, and Texas Municipal in the appendix.
- "Water and air quality: An opportunity for states." By Thomas Salzer. *Natural Resources & Environment*, Spring 2018, pp. 57-59.
  Considers the challenges local and state governments face when environmental issues and disasters strike close to home. Discusses the federal government's role in such disasters and uses the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan as an example.
- "Lone stars." By Ashley Powers. *New Yorker*, April 30, 2018, pp. 30-35.
  Examines the constitutional sheriffs movement and its belief that the sheriff has the final say on a law's constitutionality in his county. Traces the movement from its 1970s beginning with William Potter Gale and the Posse Comitatus movement and highlights activities of the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA). See: https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/04/30/the-renegade-sheriffs
- "Distribution: Identify lead plumbing sources to protect public health." By Darren Lytle, et al. *Opflow*, March 2018, pp. 16-20.
  Recommends that water utilities should consider using diagnostic sampling to help identify lead sources in drinking water. Discusses different types of sampling methods. Related information at: https://www.awwa.org/resources-tools/water-knowledge/lead.aspx and https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water#getinto
- "Gerrymandering is out of control." By Eric Boehm. *Reason*, May 2018, pp. 26-34.
  Focuses on the current state of gerrymandered election districts and explains the various models that have been developed to draw more compact districts with minimum partisan intent. Suggests a new computer algorithm model may offer the best solution.
- "American epidemic." By Melinda Wenner Moyer. *Scientific American*, May 2018, pp. 44-47, 50-54, 57.
  Explores the resurgence of infectious diseases in America's urban areas. Suggests that economic disparities and substance abuse drive infection rates higher.
- "E-Verify immigrant job screening is a game of chicken, politics and state laws." By Tim Henderson. *Stateline (Pew Charitable Trusts)*, April 27, 2018, pp. 1-6.
  Finds that E-Verify, a critical tool for preventing the illegal hiring of undocumented workers, has not been used uniformly even in the states that require its use.
- "Austin Energy celebrates community solar project." *Texas Public Power*, April 2018, p. 8.
  Highlights Austin Energy's La Loma Community Solar Farm, "the largest community solar farm in the Electric Reliability Council of Texas [ERCOT] region."
- "The intersection of mental illness and the criminal justice system." By Sarah Roland. *Voice for the Defense*, April 2018, pp. 27-34.
  Discusses the challenges of representing a mentally ill person. Explains the shortcomings in the current criminal justice system that arise as a defense attorney for a mentally ill defendant navigates the system.

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