

Current Articles and Research Resources, November 30

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

- Track the legislative [priorities](#) of members of Congress. (ProPublica, November 20, 2017)
- Review the [financial soundness](#) of the National Flood Insurance Program. (Congressional Budget Office, November 14, 2017)
- Explore aspects of the [opioid crisis](#). (National Conference of State Legislatures, ©2017)
- Examine the most [congested roadways](#) in Texas. (Texas A&M Transportation Institute, ©2017)
- Find [opinions](#) from current and past Texas attorneys general. (Attorney General of Texas, accessed November 29, 2017)

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

- "A billionaire's war on poverty." By Simon Montlake. *Christian Science Monitor*, November 20, 2017, pp. 24-30. Highlights the varied charitable projects of Tulsa philanthropist George Kaiser and his new mission to create a comprehensive strategy of public programs to target every poor child in Tulsa from birth until third grade. Suggests his success derives from the partnering of evidenced-based analytics and empathy.
- "For civil-war scholars, a settled question that will never die: What caused the war?" By Julia Martinez. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 10, 2017, p. A45. Explores the views of three historians on why the American public has a difficult time accepting slavery as the central cause for the Civil War. Quotes one as suggesting two questions are merged as one: what caused the war and why people fought in it.
- "Skills gap growing in North Texas, though severity varies: What's being done to bridge the skills gap." By Bill Hethcock. *Dallas Business Journal*, November 17, 2017, pp. 4-6. Discusses the strong demand for middle-skill workers in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, with jobs in health care as the hardest to fill. Points out how collegiate academies, "Year Up" programs, and the Fellowship Initiative are helping to close the skills gap in North Texas.
- "For-profit colleges: decline and fall." *Economist*, November 11th-17th, 2017, pp. 28-29. Reports on the suspension of two Obama administration rules designed to protect students from predatory for-profit colleges. Mentions for-profit enrollment has declined by 33 percent.
- "Health care in America: the right dose?" *Economist*, November 4th-10th, 2017, pp. 61-62. Considers whether a merger between CVS Health and Aetna would provide strong incentives to offer consumers more access to primary care, better health care outcomes, and lower prices.
- "GOP tax plan could affect K-12 aid, teachers' pocketbooks." By Andrew Ujifusa. *Education Week*, November 15, 2017, pp. 19-20. Details how the proposed federal tax legislation could impact school finance, teachers, school choice, and charter schools.
- "In Florida, laissez-faire approach to monitoring private school vouchers." *Education Week*, November 15, 2017, pp. 1, 12-13. Discusses pros and cons of Florida's hands-off approach to regulating private schools receiving state aid in the form of publicly funded school vouchers. Details one parent's struggle with private school choice and her special needs child.
- "Education effects of banning access to in-state resident tuition for unauthorized immigrant students." By Alexander Villarraga-Orjuela and Brinck Kerr. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, December 2017, pp. 621-643. Discusses the effects of state laws that prevent unauthorized immigrant students from receiving in-state tuition and other state financial benefits for higher education. Examines policies implemented in Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, and Ohio, and their effect on college enrollment, school dropout rates of undocumented students, and enrollment of United States citizens.
- "Federal funding in Texas: a vital part of the state budget." By Kevin McPherson and Bruce Wright. *Fiscal Notes*, November 2017, pp. 1, 3-6. Highlights the role of federal funds in the Texas state budget for education, health care, and infrastructure. Compares Texas to other states on revenue received from the federal government. (Report at: http://www.tbb.state.tx.us/Documents/Publications/Primer/3149_Top_100_Federal_Funding_Sources_2017.pdf) (See: <https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/fiscal-notes/2017/november/federal-funding.php#article>)
- "Building blocks for addressing social determinants of health." By Stuart M. Butler. *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)*, November 21, 2017, pp. 1855-1856. Suggests that to support social factors in health, more states should adopt "children's cabinets" and/or "health cabinets" to coordinate departments dealing with medical care as well as housing, transportation, social services, and education.
- "Five key takeaways from the recently-passed 'Hail Bill.'" By Emily Buchanan. *Journal of Texas Insurance Law*, Fall 2017, pp. 3-5. Examines five components of HB1774, 85th Legislature, R.S., as it relates to insurance claims. Highlights the quandary for Texans facing Hurricane Harvey damage and the overlapping effective date of this new law. (Related information at: <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=85R&Bill=HB1774>)
- "Cost-of-living adjustments (2017)." *NASRA Issue Brief (National Association of State Retirement Administrators)*, November 2017, pp. 1-16. Discusses periodic cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) in state and local government pensions and common COLA types and features, as well as COLA costs and recent changes. Features an appendix of COLA provisions by state, including Employees Retirement System of Texas and Teacher Retirement System of Texas. (See: <http://www.nasra.org/files/issue%20Briefs/NASRACOLA%20Brief.pdf>)
- "Interior, EPA each outline efforts to reduce regulatory burdens." By Nick Snow. *Oil and Gas Journal*, November 6, 2017, p. 27. Summarizes reports from the United States Department of the Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] that identify energy-related regulatory burdens found within their operations. Notes that these reports are mandated in Executive Order 13783. (Reports at: https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/interior_energy_actions_report_final.pdf and <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-10/documents/EO-13783-final-report-10-25-2017.pdf>) (Related information at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/03/28/presidential-executive-order-promoting-energy-independence-and-economy-1>)
- "Utilities can do more to partner with customers; regain the connection." By John Hargrove. *Public Utilities Fortnightly*, November 2017, pp. 60-61. Argues that by changing their business models utilities can take advantage of opportunities to serve as energy experts for their customers.
- "Cybersecurity quest sends states to vets, students and women." By Jenni Bergal. *Stateline (Pew Charitable Trusts)*, November 27, 2017, pp. 1-4. Discusses how state information technology agencies are creating a pipeline of cyber talent to fill cybersecurity jobs and to replace experienced staffers who will retire in the coming years. (See: <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2017/11/27/cybersecurity-quest-sends-states-to-vets-students-and-women>)
- "Facing more 'hoops.'" By Joey Berlin. *Texas Medicine*, November 2017, pp. 37-43. Debates the use of prior authorization requirements from health plans to battle the opioid crisis, with some physicians supporting such initiatives and others considering them to be inefficient and ineffective. (See: <https://www.texmed.org/Template.aspx?id=45914>)
- "EIA says electricity prices reflect rising delivery costs." *Texas Public Power*, October 2017, p. 9. Summarizes a recent article from the United States Energy Information Administration's publication Today in Energy that focuses on the relationship between the cost of fuels for producing electricity and the average retail price of electricity. (Related information at: <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=32812>)
- "Understanding water security: finding solutions for accessible, adequate and acceptable water for the future." By Kathy Wythe. *txH2O*, Fall 2017, pp. 2-4. Considers aspects of water security and whether the United States has secure water sources and supplies. (See: <http://twri.tamu.edu/publications/txh2o/fall-2017/understanding-water-security/>)

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