

Current Articles & Research Resources, May 10

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Related Categories: Current Articles, Week in review, Research Resources

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

- Catch up on [Amendments to the Texas Constitution Since 1876](#). (Texas Legislative Council, May 2018)
- Track [fiscal trends](#) in all 50 states. (Pew Charitable Trusts, May 2, 2018)
- Read about [grants](#) released by the federal government to the states to combat the opioid crisis. (Council of State Governments, May 2, 2018)
- Review [active shooter](#) incidents of 2016 and 2017. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, April 2018)

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

- "Student-body president impeached at Texas State following protests." By Katherine Mangan. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 27, 2018, p. A31. Examines the recent impeachment of the Texas State University student body president. Highlights background events on campus including offensive fliers from white-supremacist groups, a student newspaper editorial on white privilege, and steps the administration is taking to improve the situation.
- "The hand that blocks the cradle." By Liz Hayes. *Church & State*, May 2018, pp. 10-12. Discusses legislative efforts in several states to create religious exemptions for taxpayer-funded adoption and foster care agencies. Explains these bills are primarily crafted to discriminate against same-sex parents, but could also allow agencies to turn away couples who are interfaith, interracial, previously divorced, or who have different religious beliefs from any given agency.
- "More carbon, less nutrition." By Elvina Nawaguna. *CQ Weekly*, April 23, 2018, pp. 19-21. Discusses the effects of rising carbon emissions on the quality of food crops. Argues increased carbon in the atmosphere is depleting the nutritional value of crops and putting low-income populations at risk for nutritional issues.
- "Striking teachers: Pedagogic protest." *Economist*, May 5th-11th, 2018, p. 25. Reports more teacher strikes are likely as states continue to cut taxes and education spending, noting North Carolina could be the next state to face a strike. Explains the strikes are galvanizing public-sector workers in states where Democrats hope to make gains in mid-term elections and posing trouble for Republicans in states with teacher unrest.
- "Trade and American businesses: Chain reaction." *Economist*, May 5th-11th, 2018, pp. 62-63. Examines how the Trump administration's efforts to impose tariffs on China could disrupt American firms' global supply chains. Includes chart showing the impact of

proposed tariffs on certain products.

- **"Bitcoin and beyond: Alternative currencies, or history's biggest bubble?"** By TJ Costello and Bruce Wright. *Fiscal Notes*, April 2018, pp. 6-10.
Discusses the basics of bitcoin and cryptocurrency. Looks at the demand, security issues, and tax implications of bitcoin.
- **"The Second Amendment and a well-regulated firearms environment."** By Lawrence O. Gostin and Sarah Duranske. *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)*, May 1, 2018, pp. 1763-1764.
Argues that, given the high burden of firearm deaths, the President should declare a public health emergency and convene an expert, nonpartisan blue-ribbon panel to propose an evidence-based and constitutionally permissible legislative agenda. Lists six elements that should be included in a comprehensive public health strategy to address gun violence.
- **"Fixing flood insurance."** By Leonard Shabman. *Milken Institute Review*, Second Quarter 2018, pp. 68-78.
Describes how the oversight of flood insurance was entrusted to the federal government, resulting in the National Flood Insurance Program. Discusses possible program reforms being considered in Congress after the severe flooding from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in 2017 revealed its shortcomings.
- **"Welfare reform 2.0."** By Robert Verbruggen. *National Review*, May 14, 2018, pp. 29-30.
Presents the pros and cons of welfare reform proposals currently before Congress in which food stamp recipients would have more specific work requirements. Discusses whether these could be applied to other safety-net programs.
- **"Digital vigilantes."** By Nicholas Schmidle. *New Yorker*, May 7, 2018, pp. 30-34, 36-37.
Discusses the 1986 *Computer Fraud and Abuse Act* that made it illegal for companies to steal back or "actively defend" hacked information. Highlights the proposed *Active Cyber Defense Certainty Act*, which would legalize some activities that were prohibited by the earlier act.
- **"Drones on the border: Efficacy and privacy implications."** By David Bier and Matthew Feeney. *Policy Brief (CATO Institute)*, May 1, 2018, pp. 1-10.
Reports the United States Customs and Border Protection's drone program has failed to live up to expectations — accounting for only 0.5 percent of apprehensions at a cost of \$32,000 per arrest. Expresses concerns that the drones allow for government surveillance with minimal oversight and without warrants.
- **"A different grid perspective: Like a river."** By Charles Bayless. *Public Utilities Fortnightly*, April 2018, pp. 68-72.
Argues for an energy grid that is an interconnected system which will allow energy "to be coordinated and used across wide areas, increasing their value through increased optionality." Discusses reserves, balancing the difference between generation and loads, capacity factor, and cost.
- **"This new federal law will change foster care as we know it."** By Teresa Wiltz. *Stateline (Pew Charitable Trusts)*, May 2, 2018, pp. 1-5.
Discusses a new law, part of the *Bipartisan Budget Act*, that changes the rules on how states can spend federal child welfare funds on foster care and child abuse prevention. Explains the law prioritizes keeping families together, limiting placements in institutional settings such as group homes. Related information at: <https://www.congress.gov/114/bills/hr5456/BILLS-114hr5456pcs.pdf>

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