

TEXAS PENSIONS

Galveston Reaches Pension Agreement with City Police Department

March 21, 2019, By Nick Powell

The city of Galveston and its police union have reached a tentative agreement on a pension plan, ending months of contentious negotiations, city officials announced Wednesday.

A Tuesday meeting brokered by Republican state Reps. Dan Flynn and Mayes Middleton helped facilitate the final agreement between city officials and the Galveston Police Pension Board, which resolved governance and funding issues.

[Houston Chronicle](#)

Texas Senate Advances Bill to Shore Up Teacher Pension Fund

March 25, 2019, By Aliyya Swaby

The Texas Senate unanimously passed legislation Monday that is designed to make the Teacher Retirement System pension fund financially healthy and give one-time checks to retired teachers.

Senate Bill 12, filed by Sen. Joan Huffman, R-Houston, would increase how much the state, school districts and current teachers contribute to the pension fund over the next six years. For the first two years, the changes will cost the state about \$555.1 million in general revenue. About \$195 million of that money would go toward giving retirees one-time additional checks next fiscal year of up to \$500.

[Texas Tribune](#)

Texas House Approves 2020-21 Budget Plan, Keeps Extra \$9 Billion For School Finance, Property Tax Relief

March 27, 2019, By Edgar Walters, Cassandra Pollock, and Alex Samuels

In Dennis Bonnen's first major test as speaker of the Texas House, the chamber he oversees resoundingly passed a \$251 billion budget Wednesday after a long but largely civil debate — a departure from the dramatics that have typically defined such an affair.

The supplemental bill also includes:

- About \$1.3 billion to shore up a system that pays out teacher pensions, contingent on the passage of a pension reform bill, which includes \$658 million from the state savings account to provide a one-time "13th check" made out to retired teachers
- \$2 million for state mental hospital improvements, which includes funding to plan the construction of new hospitals in the Panhandle and the Dallas area.

[Texas Tribune](#)

TEXAS ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Environmental, Economic Damage A Concern Now That Fire Is Out

March 25, 2019, By Juan A. Lozano

Businesses and residents expressed concern Monday about the environmental and economic fallout from a fire at a Houston-area petrochemical storage farm that sent huge plumes into the air for days and prompted the partial closure of one of the busiest commercial waterways in the U.S.

Officials said it could be several more days before a section of the Houston Ship Channel reopens. Investigators with Harris County, which includes Houston, said they have delivered a subpoena to Intercontinental Terminals Company — the firm that owns the facility — to preserve any evidence regarding the cause of the blaze. Students returned to class after the fire prompted school closures near the facility.

[AP News](#)

As Exports Boom, Trade Uncertainty Pressures Texas Economy: Dallas Fed

March 25, 2019, By Erin Douglas

Tariffs on electronic components, steel and aluminum, as well as the not-yet-ratified U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, are putting pressure on the future of Texas manufacturing and the state's overall economy, economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas wrote in a quarterly report on the Southwest Economy.

Texas accounts for 19 percent of U.S. exports, and the state's growth rate of exports has nearly double that of the nation since 2000. In more recent years since the shale revolution and increased activity in West Texas' Permian Basin, manufacturing exports in the state took off -- last year the industry accounted for 78.5 percent of Texas' exports; petroleum and coal products was the state's largest manufacturing export sector, representing \$55.7 billion.

[Houston Chronicle](#)

Texas Workforce Commission: Texas Economy Continues to Grow

March 26, 2019, By Salina Madrid

The Texas economy is on a growing trend. According to a recent report released by the Texas Workforce Commission, February marked the 106th month of positive job growth for the state of Texas.

The report shows that over the month of February, 17,700 non-farm jobs were added to the state.

Private sector employers added 256,000 jobs over the year. Private annual employment growth was at 2.5 percent in February and has held above 2.0 percent since October 2017.

[KFox 14 News](#)

NATIONAL PENSION, INVESTMENTS & LEGAL

MainePERS Has Some Suggestions for Struggling Public Pensions

March 21, 2019, By John Manganaro

According to Sandy Matheson, executive director of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System (MainePERS), there is good reason to be optimistic that the public pension system in the U.S. may be turning a corner towards greater stability and financial strength.

She says this because she has seen firsthand how a troubled public pension system can be reformed. In addition to her description of the MainePERS turnaround, she points out that a good portion of the unfunded liabilities on the books of public retirement systems today were actually created years ago—under employer contribution and benefit structures that have since been reformed. In Maine's case, after decades of irresponsible management, the plan today is far more conservative about its long-term assumed rates of returns and its projected liability discount rates, and it forbids the creation of any new unfunded liabilities.

[PLANSPONSOR](#)

Court Orders Back Payments to City Workers in Prop B Case

March 25, 2019, By Andrew Bowen

A state Court of Appeal on Monday ordered the city of San Diego to make back payments to workers who were hired after voters passed the landmark pension reform measure, Proposition B.

The court was tasked with carrying forward a ruling from last summer by the state Supreme Court, which found city officials violated state labor laws when they placed Prop B on the ballot. While Prop B was a citizens' initiative, the high court found then-Mayor Jerry Sanders was still obligated to meet and confer with city unions over the pension reform.

[KPBS](#)

Pension Decision Looms Over Kentucky Legislature's Last Day

March 26, 2019, By Adam Beam

When the Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence joined the state's pension system in the early 2000s, it had to set aside roughly 6 percent of each employee's salary for the retirement plan.

Today, it's nearly 50 percent — and it's scheduled to jump to 84 percent in July, which state officials say is necessary to keep one of the country's worst-funded public pension systems solvent.

[AP News](#)

The information contained in the PRB Weekly Clips is for informational purposes only and does not represent the views, positions or opinions of the Texas Pension Review Board.