



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

***Expanding Health Coverage in California: County Jails as Enrollment Sites.* By Shannon McConville, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. May 2016. 10 p.**

http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_quick.asp?i=1196

“In 2014, the first year of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) implementation, the number of Californians with health insurance increased substantially. However, millions of state residents continue to lack comprehensive health coverage, and those who remain uninsured are likely more difficult to enroll through traditional strategies.... Outreach and enrollment efforts aimed at local jail populations are set within the policy context of ... Realignment, which created incentives and resources for local corrections agencies to improve reentry outcomes. With expansions in access to health insurance coverage under the ACA, nearly all counties are establishing programs to provide enrollment assistance to jail inmates as part of a more comprehensive reentry strategy. But resources and capacity are limited, so it is important to identify effective models to maximize the potential of county correctional systems as sites of insurance enrollment.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Views of the National Economy are Clouded by Personal Finance and Employment Concerns.

The Associated Press–NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. May 12, 2016. 8 p.

http://www.apnorc.org/PDFs/EconViews/economy%20report%20draft_v5_DTP%20Formatted_new%20image.pdf

“Few Americans think the economy has bounced back substantially from the financial crisis of 2008 and the recession that immediately followed.... More affluent Americans are inclined to have a rosier view of the economy, while those with lower incomes tend to be more doubtful. Two-thirds of people with annual household incomes over \$100,000 say the economy is at least halfway back from the recession, while half of those with incomes under \$30,000 say there has been little or no recovery.... Only 28% of adults have confidence they would be able to find equal or better employment if they left their current position.”

ECONOMY

The Elusive Boost from Cheap Oil. By Sylvain Ludek, et al. Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. Apr. 18, 2016. 5 p.

<http://www.frbsf.org/economic-research/files/el2016-13.pdf>

“The steep decline in oil prices since June 2014 did not translate into a strong boost to consumer spending. While other factors like weak foreign growth and strong dollar appreciation have contributed to this weaker-than-expected response, part of the muted boost from cheaper oil appears to stem from the fact that consumers expected this decline to be temporary. Because of this, households saved rather than spent the gains from lower prices at the pump. However, continued low oil prices could change consumer perceptions, leading them to increase spending as they learn about this greater degree of persistence.”

EDUCATION

From Print to Pixel: The Role of Videos, Games, Animations and Simulations within K-12 Education. Project Tomorrow. May 2016. 16 p.

<http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/pdfs/SU15AnnualReport.pdf>

Using tools such as videos, games, animations and simulations has increased in schools, as has the use of online textbooks. This report summarizes results from a survey of students, teachers, librarians, administrators, parents and community members from 2,600 school districts and 7,600 schools in the United States. The report found that between 2012-2015, K-12 schools have experienced a 21% increase in the use of videos found online, an 18% increase in the use of games, and a 14% increase in the use of online curriculum for instruction. Teachers and principals find that use of technology greatly improves student engagement and enables more personalized instruction. The report gives “a glimpse into the future in terms of what we should expect in further adoptions of these visually engaging digital tools in education.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

SECURE Water Act Section 9503 (c)—Reclamation Climate Change and Water 2016. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation. Mar. 2016. 307 p.

<http://www.usbr.gov/climate/secure/>

This report “identifies climate change as a growing risk to Western water management and cites warmer temperatures, changes to precipitation, snowpack and the timing and quality of streamflow runoff across

major river basins as threats to water sustainability.... Specific projections include: a temperature increase of 5-7 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century; a precipitation increase over the northwestern and north-central portions of the Western U.S. and a decrease over the southwestern and south-central areas; a decrease for almost all of the April 1st snowpack, a standard benchmark measurement used to project river basin runoff; and a 7 to 27% decrease in April to July stream flow in several river basins, including the Colorado, the Rio Grande, and the San Joaquin.”

***The Importance of Base Flow in Sustaining Surface Water Flow in the Upper Colorado River Basin.* By Matthew P. Miller, et al. *Water Resources Research*. Published ahead of print. Mar. 31, 2016. 16 p.**

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/2015WR017963/epdf> (Available at the California State Library)

Researchers suggest thinking about groundwater and surface water as a joint resource when considering how best to manage the current and future water resources in the basin. “Scientists used a new method to more accurately estimate the percentage of groundwater that supports streamflow. Researchers studied long-term records of water chemistry and streamflow data at 146 sites in the Upper Colorado River Basin in Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona. These data were then analyzed to create a model to predict and map where streamflow originates in the basin. On average, 56% of the streamflow in the basin originated from groundwater.” (*Science Daily*, May 9, 2016).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***County Pay Practices: Although the Counties We Visited Have Rules in Place to Ensure Fairness, Data Show That a Gender Wage Gap Still Exists.* California State Auditor. 2015-132. May 2016. 85 p.**

<http://www.auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2015-132.pdf>

“[T]his audit report concerning county pay practices at four California counties – Fresno, Los Angeles, Orange and Santa Clara ... concludes that a gender wage gap continues to exist.... Women earned between 73 percent and 88 percent of what men earned.... This aggregate measure of the gender wage gap ... has slightly widened at each of the four counties.... Our audit also found that men and women do not occupy highly-compensated jobs with the same frequency.... Nevertheless, the level of pay disparity we found between men and women was often less than five percent when we reviewed compensation levels with specific job classifications, or groups of classifications having similar compensation amounts.”

HEALTH

***Genetically Engineered Crops: Experiences and Prospects.* The National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine. National Academies Press. 2016. 407 p.**

<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/23395/genetically-engineered-crops-experiences-and-prospects>
(Free registration required)

“Genetically engineered crops pose no additional risks to humans and the environment when compared to conventional crops, according to a new report. The research ... is the result of a sweeping review of nearly 900 publications on the effects of genetically modified crops on human health and the environment. Genetic engineering has helped agricultural producers in the U.S., including small farmers thrive.... Widespread use of genetically modified crops, which are often engineered to resist the effects of pesticides, has contributed to concerning levels of pesticide resistance in weeds and insects. Pests improve in their ability to resist pesticides every time the chemicals are sprayed, creating a vicious cycle of increased spraying and more resistance.” (*Time*, May 17, 2016).

HUMAN SERVICES

***Partnered but Poor.* By Shawn Fremstad. Center for American Progress. Mar. 11, 2016. 18 p.**
<https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/10123038/PartneredButPoor.pdf>

“People living in single-parent families are much more likely to have low incomes and experience economic hardships than those living in both married and unmarried partnered families with children. At the same time, however, the vast majority of people in low-income families with children are in families headed by married or unmarried partners, as are most people in families with children that receive means-tested benefits. This fact flies in the face of claims that marriage is a panacea for poverty. This issue brief provides basic facts about differences in low-income rates for three family types: married-couple, cohabiting-couple, and single-parent families with children.”

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

***School District Spending Per Student.* By Katie Park, et al. National Public Radio. Apr. 18, 2016.**
<http://www.npr.org/2016/04/18/474256366/why-americas-schools-have-a-money-problem>

The School Money Project looks at how schools in the U.S. receive funding—the structure and inequities. The first part of this series includes a map that illustrates school district spending throughout the country—indicating what school districts spend in comparison the national average of \$11,841 per student. An interactive feature shows school district spending by state and county.

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