



Studies in the News

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ECONOMY

***The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2013.* Congressional Budget Office.**

June 8, 2016. 34 p.

<https://www.cbo.gov/publication/51361>

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) regularly analyzes the distribution of household income before and after government transfers (such as food stamps and other social programs) and federal taxes. “In this report, CBO analyzed the distribution of four types of federal taxes: individual income taxes, payroll (or social insurance) taxes, corporate income taxes, and excise taxes. Taken together, those taxes amounted to about \$20,000 per household, on average, in 2013. Thus, average after-tax income—which equals market income plus government transfers minus federal taxes—was about \$80,000, and the average federal tax rate (federal taxes divided by before-tax income) was about 20%.”

EDUCATION

The Importance of At-Risk Funding. By Emily Parker, et al. Education Commission of the States. June 2016. 8 p.

<http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/The-Importance-of-At-risk-Funding.pdf>

This report summarizes how states support funding for “at-risk” youth in grades K-12. States generally provide this funding out of their regular funding formulas, or through “categorical funding.” Some states have unique methods of determining the amount of money distributed—such as Colorado, where the amount is equal to 12-29% of their per-pupil funding. Most states identify children who receive this funding via their participation in the National School Lunch Program, but some rely on signs of poor academic performance. The authors also point to several studies that show “investing additional funds in schools with a high population of at-risk students can improve educational outcomes for those students.”

EMPLOYMENT

One Third of a Nation: Strategies for Helping Working Families. By Isabel Sawhill, et al. Brookings Institution. May 2016. 26 p.

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2016/05/31-one-third-of-a-nation-strategies-for-working-families-sawhill/one-third-of-a-nation.pdf>

This report discusses causes of the phenomenon known as the low-wage work gap. “We focus on shorter- and longer-term policies that might improve the economic prospects of these households. In the short-run, what they most need is jobs and higher wages. In the longer-term, they need more education and stronger families.... The biggest impact on the economic well-being of these households is achieved by simply assuming that they all work full time.... Why they are not working more—the causes of the ‘work gap’—remain a puzzle.... [O]n the basis of evidence showing a long-term decline in the employed proportion of the working-age population, especially among men, new policies may be in order—including subsidized jobs in the public or private sector.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Managing Water for the Environment During Drought. By Jeffrey Mount, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. June 2016. 24 p.

http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_616JMR.pdf

This report compares California environmental drought management to that of the Australian state of Victoria. “Four general lessons could be of high value to California: 1. Better planning prior to droughts can improve drought resilience of native species and reduce conflicts, 2. Strong federal-state partnerships—involving both policies and funding—are vital to reducing drought impacts, granting the environment 3. A water right that can be traded improves flexibility in environmental water management during drought, 4. Integrating the environment as an equal priority to other water uses improves drought preparation and response. Much more needs to be done to improve the drought resilience of California’s freshwater ecosystems.”

***Expanding California's Water Resources with Deep Groundwater.* By Mary Kang, et al. Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment. June 2016.**

Research Brief. 3 p:

<http://woods.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/JacksonKang-DeepGroundwaterBrief-2016FINAL.pdf>

Full Study. 6 p:

<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2016/06/21/1600400113.full.pdf>

For this study, “the researchers analyzed 938 chemical, geological and depth data points from 360 oil and gas fields across eight counties in California—Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, Kern, Fresno, Solano, Yolo and Colusa—and depth data from 34,392 oil and gas wells.” The report found that groundwater volumes in the Central Valley are three times higher than previous estimates. There are abundant sources of fresh water at deeper depths despite increasing salinity levels. Underground sources of drinking water and freshwater zones in all eight counties are exposed to oil and gas activities. The authors recommend utilizing deeper groundwater aquifers for fresh water, and continuing to gather well depth data.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Investing in California's Democracy: Building a Partnership for Performance.* By Caitlin Maple. CA Forward. May 2016. 60 p.**

<https://cafwd.app.box.com/s/rtczvuj6395d8npyhcb0oozr1hvzpxlv>

This report explores options for California to modernize the financing and governance of its election process. It recommends an approach that utilizes technology and increased collaboration between the state and the counties, and among the counties, to control costs while “making the election process accessible and efficient from the voters’ perspectives. Under this approach, a shared funding model can be developed that provides adequate resources and the right incentives for collaboration and continuous improvement.” The report suggests that, in addition to the cost savings and fostering a more cohesive strategic approach, it may be possible to reframe the election process in ways that improve public trust and civic engagement.

HEALTH

***Survey of Non-Group Health Insurance Enrollees.* Kaiser Family Foundation. May 2016. 36 p.**

<http://kff.org/health-reform/poll-finding/survey-of-non-group-health-insurance-enrollees-wave-3/>

This report “seeks to shed light on the experiences and opinions of those purchasing their own health insurance in the non-group market.... The majority of enrollees in ACA-compliant non-group plans give their overall coverage a positive rating, with 14% calling their plan ‘excellent’ and about half (52%) saying it is ‘good.’ However, the share rating their coverage as ‘not so good’ or ‘poor’ is higher in 2016 (31%) than it was in the two previous waves of the survey (20% in 2014 and 21% in 2015). Non-group enrollees have consistently given their plans lower ratings than their counterparts in employer-sponsored plans, however among those with employer coverage, the share rating their coverage as ‘not so good’ or ‘poor’ is also higher in 2016 than it was in previous years.”

HUMAN SERVICES

***2016 Kids Count Data Book.* The Annie E. Casey Foundation. June 21, 2016. 56 p.**

<http://www.aecf.org/resources/the-2014-kids-count-data-book/>

“Since 1990, KIDS COUNT has ranked states annually on overall child well-being using an index of key indicators [on Economic Well-Being, Education, Health, and Family and Community].... Comparing data

from before and after the recession reveals positive and negative developments in child well-being nationally. Broadly speaking, children experienced gains in the Education and Health domains, but setbacks in the Economic Well-Being and Family and Community domains.” California received its highest ranking in Health (11th) and the lowest in Economic Well-Being (47th), with its overall child well-being ranked 36th—two ranks up from the previous year.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

California Transportation Plan 2040: Integrating California’s Transportation Future. California State Transportation Agency. June 2016. 134 p.

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/californiatransportationplan2040/index.shtml>

“The California Transportation Plan (CTP) provides a long-range policy framework to meet our future mobility needs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The CTP defines goals, performance-based policies, and strategies to achieve our collective vision for California’s future statewide, integrated, multimodal transportation system. The plan envisions a sustainable system that improves mobility and enhances our quality of life.”

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