



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

November 22, 2017

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2017 U.S. holiday spending projected to increase

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ECONOMY

Monthly Economic Review. By Jack Kleinhenz. National Retail Federation. Oct. 2017. 4 p.
<https://nrf.com/sites/default/files/Documents/2017%20October%20MER.pdf>

"It's that time of year again, when consumers gear up for the holiday season. This year, NRF expects U.S. holiday retail sales to increase between 3.6 and 4%, meeting or exceeding last year's growth of 3.6% and the five-year average of 3.5%. We are optimistic that retailers will see a healthy holiday season, and several indicators support that outlook." The report credits consumer confidence, low unemployment levels, and an economy that has bounced back from the recent hurricanes. Economists generally agree that [gift-giving is an inefficient use of resources](#), however.

EDUCATION

The Majority Report: Supporting the Educational Success of Latino Students in California.
The Education Trust-West. Nov. 2017. 28 p.
https://29v0kg31gs803wndhe1sj1hd-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/ETW_MajorityReport.FINAL-11.3.17.pdf

This report summarizes the current state of California's Latino student population, noting their achievements, i.e., the number of Latinos with associate and bachelor's degrees has doubled since 2006, but also outlining areas where there are still struggles, such as college affordability and underrepresentation in California's public higher education system. The authors lay out recommendations

for policymakers to improve educational opportunities for Latinos—among them: commit to the “equity proposition” in the Local Control Funding Formula, invest in early learning, support English learners, and “provide more financial support for low-income students to attend college.”

EMPLOYMENT

Modernizing U.S. Labor Standards for 21st Century Families. By Bridget Ansel, et al. Brookings Hamilton Project. Oct. 2017. 25 p.

http://www.hamiltonproject.org/assets/files/modernizing_us_labor_standards_21st_century_families.pdf

This paper outlines various types of workforce discrepancies faced by today’s employees, and the specific reforms that would increase equity. “In order to address the challenges posed by caregiving responsibilities, burdensome scheduling practices, and wage discrimination, we propose a number of reforms.... Cover the range of family and medical needs that require time away from work [for women and men].... Be available to all workers, men and women equally.... Have a sufficiently high wage replacement rate to make a difference in people’s lives.... Prohibit employers from inquiring about a worker’s salary history during the interview and hiring process.... Ensure workers have the right to discuss pay.” California’s paid leave program is held up as a successful model.

HEALTH

Assessing the Preparedness of the U.S. Health Care System Infrastructure for an Alzheimer’s Treatment. By Jodi Liu, et al. RAND Corporation. Nov. 2017. 16 p.

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2272.html

“Progress in drug development is giving rise to guarded optimism that a disease-modifying therapy for Alzheimer’s disease may become available within a few years.... However, our analysis suggests that the U.S. health care system lacks the capacity to provide patients with access to treatment within a reasonable time frame, mainly because of constraints in access to specialists to diagnose patients and confirm treatment eligibility. Failure to increase capacity means that as many as 2.1 million patients with MCI [Mild Cognitive Impairment] due to Alzheimer’s disease might develop dementia between 2020 and 2040 while waiting for evaluation and treatment.... Our hope, therefore, is that this report will trigger a discussion among stakeholders and create a sense of urgency to start collaborating on addressing obstacles in a timely manner.”

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Data Breaches, Phishing, or Malware? Understanding the Risks of Stolen Credentials. By Kurt Thomas, et al. Google. Sep. 2017. 14 p.

<https://research.google.com/pubs/pub46437.html>

“With Google accounts as a case-study, we teamed up with the University of California, Berkeley to better understand how hijackers attempt to take over accounts in the wild. From March 2016 to March 2017, we analyzed several black markets to see how hijackers steal passwords and other sensitive data.... What we learned from the research proved to be immediately useful. We applied its insights to our existing protections and secured 67 million Google accounts before they were abused. We’re sharing this information publicly so that other online services can better secure their users, and can also supplement their authentication systems with more protections beyond just passwords.”

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