



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

***How Much Do California's Counties Spend on Incarceration and Responding to Crime?* By Scott Graves, et al. California Budget and Policy Center. Nov. 2017. 6 p.**

Fact Sheet 2017: <http://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/how-much-californias-counties-spend-incarceration-responding-crime/>

Fact Sheet 2016: <http://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/california-state-county-governments-spend-20-billion-annually-incarceration-responding-crime/>

For fiscal year 2015-16, counties spent between 4.2% and 12.6% of their budget on responding to crime, with Alpine County the lowest and Yolo County the highest. They also spent between 0.4% and 17.3% on incarceration, with Alpine County again the lowest and Kings County the highest. Fact Sheets on individual county spending are available for all California counties except San Francisco, whose statistics were not compatible with the rest of the counties.

ECONOMY

The Net Neutrality Debate: Access to Broadband Networks. By Angele Gilroy. Congressional Research Service. Nov. 22, 2017. 27 p.

<https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R40616.html>

The core principle of “net neutrality” is that network owners that provide access to the internet should neither control how consumers use the network nor be able to discriminate against content providers. In May 2017, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to reexamine the open internet rules from 2015, which classified broadband internet access as a Title II utility telecommunications service. Some argue that current FCC rules are overregulation, and that a less regulatory approach would stimulate infrastructural investment. Others, arguing for net neutrality, assert that modifying current rules would give network owners power over content and service providers, as well as consumers. Congressional action so far has focused on privacy and transparency, but not on more comprehensive legislation. The FCC will vote on December 14, 2017.

Urban Displacement. UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project.

<http://news.berkeley.edu/2017/11/16/urban-displacement-project-expands-updates-its-northern-california-maps/>

UC Berkeley’s Urban Displacement Project has expanded and updated a series of interactive maps revealing displacement in communities across Northern California. “The latest mapping shows where communities are at risk of gentrification and displacement, where gentrification and displacement are taking place now, and which neighborhoods are in such advanced stages of gentrification that while considered low-income in 2000, today they are considered moderate- or high-income.” The project also maps anti-displacement policies in the Bay Area.

EDUCATION

Investing Early: Taking Stock of Outcomes and Economic Returns from Early Childhood Programs. By Jill S. Cannon, et al. RAND. 2017. 323 p.

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1993.html

This study examines the evaluations of 115 early childhood programs to gauge the costs, benefits and outcomes of these programs. “Although preschool is perhaps the best-known early childhood intervention, the study also reviewed such programs as home visiting, parent education, government transfers providing cash and in-kind benefits, and those that use a combination of approaches. The findings demonstrate that most of the reviewed programs have favorable effects on at least one child outcome and those with an economic evaluation tend to show positive economic returns. With this expanded evidence base, policymakers can be highly confident that well-designed and -implemented early childhood programs can improve the lives of children and their families.”

EMPLOYMENT

Digitalization and the American Workforce. By Mark Muro, et al. Brookings Institution. Nov. 2017. 60 p.

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/digitalization-and-the-american-workforce/>

“[T]his report presents a detailed analysis of changes in the digital content of 545 occupations covering 90% of the U.S. workforce in all industries since 2001. The analysis categorizes U.S. occupations into jobs that require high, medium or low digital skills and tracks the impacts of rapid change.... On the upside, the augmentation of workers’ abilities to perform existing jobs—combined with the creation of

entirely new jobs—is delivering major benefits, including higher productivity and pay for wide ranges of workers, industries, and places.... On the downside, the nation’s uneven distribution of digital skills—combined with the distinctively uneven impacts on digital technologies on the labor market—appears to be associated with a series of more troublesome impacts.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Department of Water Resources: The Unexpected Complexity of the California WaterFix Project Has Resulted in Significant Cost Increases and Delays. Bureau of State Audits. Oct. 2017. 97 p.
<https://www.auditor.ca.gov/reports/2016-132/index.html>

“[T]his audit report [concerns] the Department of Water Resources’ (DWR) management of the planning efforts for the California WaterFix Project (WaterFix).... [T]he planning phase experienced significant cost increases and scheduled delays.... [W]e also found that DWR did not follow state law when it replaced the program manager for the conservation and conveyance program.... Additionally, DWR has not completed either an economic or financial analysis to demonstrate the financial viability of WaterFix. Finally, it has not fully implemented a governance structure for the design and construction phase, and has not maintained important program management documents for WaterFix.”

“Future Loss of Arctic Sea-Ice Could Drive a Substantial Decrease in California’s Rainfall.”
By Ivana Cvijanovic, et al. *Nature Communications*. Online ahead of print. Dec. 5, 2017. 33 p.
<http://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-017-01907-4>

“California could be hit with significantly more dangerous and more frequent droughts in the future as changes in weather patterns triggered by global warming block rainfall reaching the state, according to new research led by scientists at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Using complex new modeling, the scientists have found that rapidly melting Arctic sea ice now threatens to diminish precipitation over California by as much as 15% within 20 to 30 years. Such a change could have profound economic impacts in a state where the most recent drought drained several billion dollars out of the economy, severely stressed infrastructure and highlighted how even the state most proactively confronting global warming is not prepared for its fallout.... The model the scientists used homed in on the link between the disappearance of sea ice in the Arctic and the buildup of high ridges of atmospheric pressure over the Pacific Ocean. Those ridges push winter storms away from the state, causing drought.” ([Los Angeles Times](#), Dec. 5, 2017).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Review of the California Competes Tax Credit. By Brian Weatherford. Legislative Analyst’s Office. Oct. 31, 2017. 20 p.
<http://lao.ca.gov/publications/report/3709>

“California Competes awards income tax credits to attract or retain businesses considering a significant new investment in California.... [W]e find that about 35% of the awards—15% of the total dollar value—went to businesses that sell goods and services very near to them in California [and] provide ‘windfall benefits’ as they result in no change in the overall level of economic activity in the state. Moreover, these awards inadvertently harm other, equally deserving California businesses.... Most of the tax credits ... were awarded to businesses that sell goods and services within and outside of California.... It is difficult, however, to assess the program’s effectiveness ... because we cannot know what actions the businesses awarded tax credits would have otherwise taken.... We recommend that the Legislature end California Competes.”

HEALTH

Identifying Sources of Inefficiency in Health Care. By Amitabh Chandra, et al. The National Bureau of Economic Research. Nov. 2017. 50 p.

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w24035.pdf>

“In medicine, the reasons for variation in treatment rates across hospitals serving similar patients are not well understood. Some interpret this variation as unwarranted, and push standardization of care as a way of reducing allocative inefficiency. However, an alternative interpretation is that hospitals with greater expertise in a treatment use it more because of their comparative advantage, suggesting that standardization is misguided. We develop a simple economic model that provides an empirical framework to separate these explanations. Estimating this model with data on treatments for heart attack patients, we find evidence of substantial variation across hospitals in both allocative inefficiency and comparative advantage, with most hospitals overusing treatment in part because of incorrect beliefs about their comparative advantage. A stylized welfare-calculation suggests that eliminating allocative inefficiency would increase the total benefits from this treatment by about a third.”

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