



## Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT**

*Prisoners in 2016.* By E. Ann Carson. U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Jan. 9, 2018. 36 p.

<https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=6187>

The U.S. prison population decreased 1% to 1,505,400 between 2015 to 2016, and the imprisonment rate decreased to 450 per 100,000 residents of all ages. In California, even though the number of inmates increased by half a percent, the imprisonment rate remains at 356 per 100,000 residents, which is lower than the national rate. California's prison population remains below 95% of capacity as of the end of 2016.

## ECONOMY

***Gender Issues in Economics.* American Economic Association. Jan. 5, 2018.**

<https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2018/preliminary/2095>

“It is not difficult to find an all-male panel at the annual January mega-gathering of American economists. They are as common as PowerPoint presentations and pie charts. One such panel this year met to sleepily critique President Trump’s economic policies, but it was overshadowed by another panel, two ballrooms away, that jolted a profession that prides itself on cool rationality. That panel on Friday was stocked with women, each of whom presented new research that revealed a systemic bias in economics and presaged a move by the field’s leaders to promise to address some of those issues. Paper after paper presented at the American Economic Association panel showed a pattern of gender discrimination, beginning with barriers women face in choosing to study economics and extending through the life cycle of their careers, including securing job opportunities, writing research papers, gaining access to top publications and earning proper credit for published work.” ([New York Times](#), Jan. 10, 2018).

## EDUCATION

***Saving the Associate of Arts Degree: How an A.A. Degree Can Become a Better Path to Labor Market Success.* By Mark Schneider, et al. American Enterprise Institute. Jan. 2018. 18 p.**

<https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Saving-the-Associate-of-Arts-Degree.pdf>

“While 670,000 students earn two-year degrees from community colleges each year, just 32,000 job postings in 2016 specifically asked for an associate of arts degree.... Five years after graduation, A.A. degree holders earn an average of less than \$40,000 a year.... That’s partially because the degrees are designed as transfer credentials and not to equip students with marketable skills.... Average annual earnings of A.A. degree holders would increase by at least \$4,000, according to the report, if community colleges added elective, skills-based courses or high-value, industry-recognized certifications to A.A. programs.” ([Inside Higher Ed](#), Jan. 24, 2018).

## EMPLOYMENT

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

[https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/mpp\\_2017nov15\\_digitalization\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/mpp_2017nov15_digitalization_full_report.pdf)

Controlling for education, digital literacy is positively associated with wages. “In 2002, a one-point increase in digitalization score predicted a \$166.20 (in 2016 dollars) increase in real annual average wages for occupations with the same education requirements.” However, digitalization relies on skills unevenly distributed throughout the workforce. “The extent of digitalization varies widely across places and is strongly associated with variations in regional economic performance.... [and even as] digitization holds out significant opportunities for less-educated or historically marginalized workers or groups to move up the employment ladder, too few of them appear to be making that progress.” Expanding the high-skill talent pipeline and digital literacy, particularly for the less-educated, is imperative to advance regional economies.

## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

***Emerging Understanding of Sea Grass and Kelp as an Ocean Acidification Management Tool in California.*** By Karina J. Nielsen, et al. California Ocean Protection Council, et al. Jan. 2018. 32 p. <http://www.oceansciencetrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/OA-SAV-emerging-findings-report-1.30.18.pdf>

“California is exploring local and regional management strategies to address ocean acidification (OA). In early 2016, the West Coast OA and Hypoxia Science Panel recommended that states advance approaches that remove CO<sub>2</sub> from seawater, including making use of photosynthesizing plants in coastal environments. In addition, recent legislation in California ... calls for scientific approaches to protect and restore eelgrass beds as a critical strategy in enhancing California’s ability to withstand OA.... This report communicates emerging scientific understanding of the ability of seagrass and kelp to ameliorate ... OA in a California-specific context. It provides guidance on next steps for the State as it considers future nature-based actions to reduce the negative impacts of OA in California and beyond.” ([OA-ICC Newsletter](#), Feb. 2, 2018).

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Banking Access Strategies for Cannabis-Related Businesses.*** Cannabis Banking Working Group, California State Treasurer. Nov. 7, 2017. 32 p. <http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/cbwg/resources/reports/110717-cannabis-report.pdf>

“City officials in Los Angeles, Oakland and San Francisco are looking into the idea of creating their own banks. But despite the interest, there is just one public bank in the nation—the Bank of North Dakota—and there are [numerous obstacles to creating such an institution](#), especially if the plan is for the bank to openly work with cannabis companies. Late last year, a cannabis policy working group organized by [State Treasurer] Chiang's office recommended looking into the feasibility of a state-owned bank.... Chiang and other public officials have said the lack of banking access for cannabis companies, which has left the industry largely reliant on cash, poses public safety risks and makes it more difficult for the state and local agencies to monitor the industry and ensure businesses are paying their taxes.” ([Los Angeles Times](#), Jan. 30, 2018).

## HEALTH

**“Sexual Intercourse Among High School Students – 29 States and United States Overall, 2005-2015.”** By Kathleen Ethier, et al. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 66, no. 5152 (Jan. 5, 2018) 5 p. [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm665152a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm665152a1\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm665152a1.htm?s_cid=mm665152a1_w)

“During 2005-2015, the overall decrease in the prevalence of ever having had sexual intercourse is a positive change in the level of sexual risk among adolescents in the United States. The decreases by grade suggest that fewer students are having sexual intercourse during the earlier years of high school. This observation, as well as decreases in the prevalence of sexual intercourse among black and Hispanic students, represent positive changes among groups of students who have been determined in previous studies to be at higher risk for negative outcomes associated with early sexual initiation. Understanding the underlying causes of these decreases in the prevalence of ever having had sexual intercourse can inform strategies to ensure that such decreases continue.”

## HUMAN SERVICES

***TANF Reaching Few Poor Families.*** By Ife Floyd, et al. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Dec. 13, 2017. 19 p.

<https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/6-16-15tanf.pdf>

“The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, created by the 1996 welfare law, is designed to provide a temporary safety net to poor families — primarily those with no other means to meet basic needs. But since the TANF block grant was created, its reach has declined dramatically. In 2016, for every 100 families in poverty, only 23 received cash assistance from TANF—down from 68 families when TANF was first enacted. This ‘TANF-to-poverty ratio’ (TPR) reached its lowest point in 2014 and remained there in 2015 and 2016.” In 2016, California’s TPR was the highest (66) while Louisiana was the lowest (4).

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***Community-Owned Fiber Networks: Value Leaders in America.*** By David Talbot, et al. Responsive Communities. Jan. 2018. 16 p.

[https://cyber.harvard.edu/sites/cyber.harvard.edu/files/2018-01-10-Pricing.Study\\_.pdf](https://cyber.harvard.edu/sites/cyber.harvard.edu/files/2018-01-10-Pricing.Study_.pdf)

In response to recent changes in Federal Communications Commission policies, there has been renewed interest in community-owned broadband internet service providers. This review of 40 such residential data plans found that “most community-owned fiber-to-the-home networks charged less and offered prices that were clear and unchanging, whereas private ISPs [Internet Service Providers] typically charged initial low promotional or ‘teaser’ rates that later sharply rose, usually after 12 months.”

### ***About the California Research Bureau***

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