



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

February 21, 2018

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ECONOMY

***The Effect of the H-1B Quota on Employment and Selection of Foreign-Born Labor.* By Anna Maria Mayda, et al. NBER. Oct. 2017. 37 p.**

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w23902> (Available to .gov accounts or from the California State Library)

“Since the cap was tightened in 2004, firms hired between 20 and 50% fewer new H-1B workers than they might have hired had it remained at 195,000 visas per year. The researchers find, however, that the reduced pool of foreign workers did not lead firms to hire more Americans, and conclude that this suggests ‘low substitutability between native-born and H-1B workers in the same skill groups.’ The cap only applies to for-profit companies, not to new employees of educational institutions or nonprofit research institutions. ([NBER Digest](#), Dec. 2017).

EDUCATION

Developmental Education: An Introduction for Policymakers. By Elizabeth Ganga, et al. Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness. Feb. 2018. 12 p.

https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Developmental-Education_An-Introduction-for-Policymakers.pdf

“Large numbers of students at both two-and four-year institutions take developmental courses. Community colleges educate nearly 40% of undergraduates, and more than two-thirds of these students take at least one developmental course. Additionally, 4 in 10 students at four-year colleges take at least one developmental course. Students in developmental education, particularly at four-year colleges, are less likely to complete a program and earn a degree or credential.... Black and Hispanic students are disproportionately assigned to developmental education, and black and Hispanic students who take developmental courses graduate at lower rates than white and Asian students who take developmental courses—compounding attainment gaps.”

EMPLOYMENT

Measuring Up: How BLS Data Would Inflate Earnings for Career Training Graduates. By Ben Barrett et al. New America. Feb. 2018. 40 p.

<https://na-production.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Measuring-Up.pdf>

“Instead of disclosing or holding career-oriented college programs accountable for the amount of debt that graduates borrow relative to the amount they earn..., as the current rules do, for-profit college leaders and lobbyists have called for substituting actual students’ earnings with local estimates derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).... [W]e compared national and local BLS earnings with actual earnings from graduates of specific career-training programs. We found that, on average, the median annual earnings for graduates of all programs subject to the gainful employment regulations were \$27,494. But if local BLS estimates were used instead, the median annual earnings would rise to an average of \$49,341—an increase of \$21,847, or nearly 80%.... Of the 10 most common fields reflected in the GE data, business administration programs had the largest gap between real earnings for graduates and their corresponding local estimates.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

“Energy Use and Life Cycle Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Drones for Commercial Package Delivery.” By Joshua K. Stolaroff, et al. *Nature Communications*, vol. 9, no. 409 (2018) 13 p.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-017-02411-5.pdf>

This study indicates that packages delivered by drone could reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use in the transportation sector. “[R]esearchers flew test campaigns with two commercial drones and developed an estimate of the energy needed to deliver a package in various scenarios.... The researchers found that the current practical range of multi-coptor drones is about 4 kilometers, which means a new network of urban warehouses or waystations. Although drones consume less energy per package-mile than delivery trucks, the additional warehouse energy required and the longer distances traveled by drones per package greatly increase the life-cycle impacts. Overall, the results are mixed, and the best choice depends on things like the size of the drone, the weight of the package and the types of power plants on the regional electricity grid. Drones are favored in regions with relatively clean electricity, like California.” ([Lawrence Livermore News](#), Feb. 13, 2018).

***Yuba River: Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study.* U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District. Jan. 2018. 204 p.**

<http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental-Projects/Yuba-River-Eco-Study/>

“[This] draft feasibility report and environmental assessment ... (marks) a major milestone in the Yuba River Ecosystem Restoration feasibility study. The draft report outlines a proposed plan to reconnect the Yuba River to its floodplain, create rearing habitat for juvenile fish, create riparian habitat, and facilitate improved conditions for the natural recruitment of riparian habitat. Improvements to approximately 178 acres of existing aquatic and riparian habitat along the lower Yuba River, between Englebright Dam and the confluence of the Yuba and Feather Rivers in Yuba County, are being proposed. Measures such as side channels, backwaters, floodplain lowering, riparian planting, and installation of hydraulic roughness and structural complexity features that replicate nature could be implemented throughout the project area.” ([News Release](#), Jan. 5, 2018).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Improving Outcomes for California Conservation Corpsmembers.* Legislative Analyst’s Office. Feb. 9, 2018. 20 p.**

<http://www.lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/3742>

“The California Conservation Corps (CCC) provides young adults 18 to 25 years old a year of paid service to work on environmental projects and respond to natural and man-made disasters. Corpsmembers receive job training that prepares them to work in these areas.... Over the years, the department has struggled to measure how effective its programs are in terms of enhancing corpsmembers’ employment opportunities and assisting them to achieve their educational goals. This is mainly due to the department’s reliance on an antiquated data management system and manual processes that has not allowed them to capture key data and use it to assess program performance.” Recommendations include clarification in statute of CCC priorities, with appropriate funding aligned, and adoption of performance measures and reports on corpsmember retention.

HEALTH

**“Understanding the Relationship between Medicaid Expansions and Hospital Closures.”
By Richard Lindrooth, et al. *Journal of Health Affairs*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Jan. 8, 2018) 10 p.**

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.2017.0976>

“Decisions by states about whether to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) have implications for hospitals’ financial health. We hypothesized that Medicaid expansion of eligibility for childless adults prevents hospital closures because increased Medicaid coverage for previously uninsured people reduces uncompensated care expenditures and strengthens hospitals’ financial position. We tested this hypothesis using data for the period 2008-16 on hospital closures and financial performance. We found that the ACA’s Medicaid expansion was associated with improved hospital financial performance and substantially lower likelihoods of closure, especially in rural markets and counties with large numbers of uninsured adults before Medicaid expansion. Future congressional efforts to reform Medicaid policy should consider the strong relationship between Medicaid coverage levels and the financial viability of hospitals. Our results imply that reverting to pre-ACA eligibility levels would lead to particularly large increases in rural hospital closures. Such closures could lead to reduced access to care and a loss of highly skilled jobs, which could have detrimental impacts on local economies.”

HUMAN SERVICES

SNAP Is Linked with Improved Nutritional Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs. By Steven Carlson, et al. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Jan. 17, 2018. 19 p.

<https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/1-17-18fa.pdf>

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps)“ reduces the overall prevalence of food insecurity by as much as 30%, and is even more effective among the most vulnerable, such as children and those with ‘very low food security,’ that is, when one or more household members have to skip meals or otherwise eat less during the year due to lack of money.... [L]ow-income adults participating in SNAP incur about \$1,400, or nearly 25%, less in medical care costs in a year than low-income non-participants. The difference is even greater for those with hypertension (nearly \$2,700 less) and coronary heart disease (over \$4,100 less).”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Community Network Map. Institute for Local Self-Reliance.

<https://muninetworks.org/communitymap>

“Communities invest in telecommunications networks for a variety of reasons - economic development, improving access to education and health care, price stabilization, etc. They range from massive networks offering a gig to hundreds of thousands in Tennessee to small towns connecting a few local businesses. This map tracks a variety of ways in which local governments have invested in wired telecommunications networks as well as state laws that discourage such approaches.”

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