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Studies in the News

California -- One Hundred Years Ago

April 1909 “John T. Burns, secretary of the Dry Farming Congress, was in Los Angeles and met a number of land owners who are interested in dry-farming problems... Los Angeles is dependent to a large extent on the growth of her tributary territory. Dry farming has much to do with the growth of the outside sections. Where irrigation projects have been impossible, the farmers have found by plowing deep, harrowing frequently, studying seed conditions and adopting other methods of slight rainfall, they are beginning to enjoy a reasonable certainty of crops... Not long ago, a farmer who lived in a section with an average ten-inch rainfall yearly considered his land worthless. Now we find that tests have proven the possibility of growing profitable crops with eight inches rainfall.” *Los Angeles Times* (April 8, 1909) pg. II5

1909 “During the few months since the Dry Farming Congress held its first exposition, much of agricultural development has been accomplished.... It has been asserted by many who have doubted the effectiveness of dry farming methods, that this has been a peculiarly auspicious year. It has been said that anybody could raise crops when the Lord provided moisture as liberally as during the current season, but that when a dry spell came, there would be failure upon failure to report. The answer to this argument will be found in the International Dry Farming Exposition. The fact that some of the sections of the West have been blessed with more than average rainfall at peculiarly opportune times cannot be denied. At the same time, there are other sections that have been peculiarly unfortunate in that rainfall has been denied them when most needed. Not everyone has succeeded in these less fortunate districts, but the reports received demonstrate that these men who have followed the methods of cultivation advocated by dry farmers have raised crops in the face of all difficulties.” *Los Angeles Times* (September 14, 1909) pg. I13

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Introduction to Studies in the News

Studies in the News is a current compilation of items significant to the Legislature and Governor's Office. It is created weekly by the California State Library's [California Research Bureau](#) to supplement the public policy debate in California. To help share the latest information with state policymakers, these reading lists are now being made accessible through the California State Library's website. This week's list of current articles in various public policy areas is presented below. Prior lists can be viewed from the California State Library's Web site at www.library.ca.gov/sitn

- When available, the URL for the full text of each item is provided.
- California State Employees may contact the State Information & Reference Center (916-654-0261); csinfo@library.ca.gov with the SITN issue number and the item number [S#].
- All other interested individuals should contact their local library - the items may be available there, or may be borrowed by your local library on your behalf.

The following studies are currently on hand:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

CIVIL LIBERTIES

Reclaiming Patriotism: A Call to Reconsider the Patriot Act. By Michael German and Michelle Richardson, American Civil Liberties Union. (The Union, New York, New York) March 2009. 39 p.

Full text at: http://www.aclu.org/pdfs/safefree/patriot_report_20090310.pdf

["The report reveals that in the years since its passage, the Patriot Act has paved the way for the expansion of government-sponsored surveillance including the gutting of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) and a recent revamping of the Attorney General Guidelines to allow law enforcement to conduct physical surveillance without suspicion. Indeed, over the last eight years, numerous expansions of executive authority have worked in tandem to infringe upon our rights. Only by understanding the larger picture of the combined effects of Patriot Act, the amendments to FISA, the guidelines for physical surveillance and other expansions of power, can Congress make an informed, consistent and principled decision about whether and how to amend all of these very powerful surveillance tools."][Request #S09-10-3467]

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DRUG PROSECUTION

The Violent Drug Market in Mexico and Lessons from Colombia. By Vanda Felbab-Brown, The Brookings Institution. (The Institution, Washington, DC) March 2009. 30 p.

Full text at:

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2009/03_mexico_drug_market_felbabbrown/03_mexico_drug_market_felbabbrown.pdf

["Border patrol officers are increasingly confronted by drug traffickers with firepower. Perhaps as much as 90% of the firearms used by Mexican drug trafficking organizations have been purchased in the United States. Murders and kidnapping of U.S. residents who are caught up in the drug trade have increased dramatically. So has the kidnapping of illegal immigrants who, sometimes snatched en masse from coyotes (people smugglers), are held for ransom to be extorted from their relatives in the United States.... The three distinct policy questions are: 1) how to significantly disrupt drug supply to the U.S., reduce consumption of illicit substances in the U.S., and reduce the global drug trade; 2) how to reroute drug trafficking from Mexico; and 3) how to reduce violence in the drug market in Mexico and suppress crime in Mexico to manageable levels."]

[Request #S09-10-3456]

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

2008 Internet Crime Report. By the Internet Crime Complaint Center. (The Center, Washington, DC) March 2009. 28 p.

Full text at: http://www.ic3.gov/media/annualreport/2008_IC3Report.pdf

["From January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008, the IC3 website received 275,284 complaint submissions. This is a 33.1% increase when compared to 2007 when 206,884 complaints were received.... This report provides a snapshot of the prevalence and impact of Internet fraud. Care must be taken to avoid drawing conclusions about the 'typical' victim or perpetrator of these types of crimes. Anyone who utilizes the Internet is susceptible, and IC3 has received complaints from both males and females ranging in age from ten to one hundred years old. Complainants can be found in all fifty states, in dozens of countries worldwide, and have been affected by everything from work-at-home schemes to identity theft. The ability to predict victimization is limited, particularly without the knowledge of other related risk factors."]

[Request #S09-10-3527]

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PRISONERS

One in 31: The Long Reach of American Corrections. By the Pew Center on the States. (The Center, Washington, DC) March 2009. 48 p.

Full text at:

http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/sentencing_and_corrections/PSPP_1in31_report_FINAL_WEB_2-27-09.pdf

["California is far from being the toughest state in terms of locking up its residents. Nationwide, 1 in 31 adults -- about 7.3 million men and women altogether -- are either behind bars or under parole or probation supervision for crimes. But in California it's one in 36, slightly below the national average. Even so, that amounts to about 750,000 Californians, with more than a fifth of them in state prison.... The report, whose chief purpose is to advocate more community-based corrections programs and less imprisonment, does bolster those who say California's correctional system is extraordinarily expensive. The average cost for the 34 states in the survey was \$29,000 per prison inmate per year, while in California, state prison officials tab costs at about \$45,000 per year for the 170,000 men and women behind bars." Sacramento Bee (March 2, 2009) 1.]

[Request #S09-10-3406]

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ECONOMY

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Rich States, Poor States: ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index.
By Arthur B. Laffer, Laffer Associates, and others. (American Legislative Exchange Council, Washington, DC) 2009. 164 p.

Full text at: http://www.alec.org/am/pdf/tax/09RSPS/26969_REPORT_full.pdf

["The authors provide an in-depth analysis of policies, some of which foster economic growth and prosperity in states like Utah, Arizona and Texas, others of which cause economic malaise in states like California, New York and Michigan. As our elected officials think about beginning the annual task of budget writing, we remind lawmakers that levying tax increases is not a sustainable answer for budget problems. Especially during an economic downturn, states need to be doing everything they can to become more competitive, not less.... This year's book on state competitiveness focuses on California. The Golden State is not only our nation's largest state in most every economic metric, it also has a highly volatile political climate. California can move from Karl Marx to Adam Smith and back again in what seems to be the blink of a political eye."]

[Request #S09-10-3521]

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INCOME

Stuck in Neutral: Economic Gains Stall Out for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in 2000s. By Marlene Kim, University of Massachusetts Boston, and Algernon Austin, Economic Policy Institute. (The Institute, Washington, DC) February 19, 2009. 10 p.

Full text at: http://epi.3cdn.net/dfc8721f9612995b86_ygm6bnk8y.pdf

["There is a common misperception that Asian Americans are the 'model minority' - - able to succeed under any conditions. But recent economic data suggest that Asian Americans, like everyone else, cannot advance when the benefits of economic growth are concentrated among the wealthiest Americans as they have been for the last decade. The economic trends for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders from 2000 to 2007 were quite similar to that of other racial and ethnic groups. Like white, Hispanic, and African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders saw no significant economic progress.... Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders' economic status varies tremendously by national origin.... Thus even though Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, when examined as a single group, may be stuck in neutral, many within this population have been left behind."]

[Request #S09-10-3510]

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LOANS AND CREDIT

Who Borrows From Payday Lenders?: An Analysis of Newly Available Data. By Amanda Logan and Christian E. Weller, Center for American Progress. (The Center, Washington, DC) March 2009

["Payday lending storefronts dot the landscape of many communities in America. But government survey data has never been publicly available for a definitive analysis of families who borrow from payday lenders. That is, until now. This paper uses recently released data from the Federal Reserve Board to examine the financial and demographic characteristics of our nation's payday loan borrowers.... Families who had taken out a payday loan within the past year tend to have less income, lower wealth, fewer assets, and less debt than families without payday loans. Families who borrowed from a payday lender in the past year were more likely to be minorities and single women than their counterparts. They also tended to be younger and had less educational attainment."][Request #S09-10-3529]

Report. 20 p.

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/03/pdf/payday_lending.pdf

Executive Summary. 3 p.

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/03/pdf/payday_lending_exec_summ.pdf

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PRODUCTIVITY

The Atlantic Century: Benchmarking EU and U.S. Innovation and Competitiveness. By Robert D. Atkinson and Scott M. Andes, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation. (The Foundation, Washington, DC) February 2009. 38 p.

Full text at: <http://www.itif.org/files/2009-atlantic-century.pdf>

["The competitive edge of the United States economy has eroded sharply over the last decade, according to a new study. The report found that the United States ranked sixth among 40 countries and regions, based on 16 indicators of innovation and competitiveness. They included venture capital investment, scientific researchers, spending on research and educational achievement. But the American economy placed last in terms of progress made over the last decade.... The results were adjusted for the size of each economy and its population. Consequently, the United States ranked sixth in venture capital investment (Sweden was first); fifth in corporate research and development spending (Japan led); and fourth in science and technology researchers (again, Sweden was first). Over all, the most innovatively competitive nation was Singapore." New York Times (February 25, 2009) 1.]

[Request #S09-10-3392]

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EDUCATION

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Success at Scale in Charter Schooling. By Steven F. Wilson, Education Sector. (American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC) March 2009. 7 p.

Full text at: http://www.aei.org/docLib/20090319_0323948EduOWilson_g.pdf

["Perhaps two hundred high-performing schools nationwide, are the bright lights of the charter school movement. Despite social and economic disadvantages, their students not only trounce their district peers on state tests but also top statewide averages and, in some cases, surpass students from surrounding affluent suburban districts. Among these 'gap-closing' schools, one broad approach, frequently called 'no excuses' schooling, appears to dominate. The Knowledge Is Power Program network of schools is the exemplar, but this approach is proliferating in other networks, including Achievement First and Uncommon Schools, and in stand-alone schools, many of which aspire to replicate themselves in coming years. But to narrow America's shameful achievement gaps, we would need thousands more such schools. Is the 'no excuses' approach sustainable, and can it be widely reproduced?"]

[Request #S09-10-3502]

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EDUCATION FINANCE

Citizen's Guide to California Public School Finance. By Vicki E. Murray, Pacific Research Institute. (The Institute, San Francisco, California) March 2009. 86 p.

Full text at:

http://liberty.pacificresearch.org/docLib/20090330_CA_Public_School_Finance.pdf

["Most people think California ranks almost last in public school funding.... The reality is, most state and national experts agree that California ranks around the middle nationally.... This analysis finds the average California public school district receives \$11,600 per pupil in total revenue; however, per-pupil averages vary considerably depending on school district type....The lack of transparency and growing complexity of the California public-school finance system makes it hard to know how much revenue districts are receiving and easy to believe the Golden State ranks poorly.... State and local revenue for school districts enrolling smaller percentages of socioeconomically disadvantaged students and English learners typically exceeds revenue for school districts enrolling the highest percentages of these students."]

[Request #S09-10-3540]

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SCHOOL MEALS

USDA Study Shows that States Failing to Connect Many Needy Children to Free School Meals. By Zoë Neuberger, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (The Center, Washington, DC) March 3, 2009. 7 p.

Full text at: <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=2701>

["Direct certification is an extremely reliable method of enrolling low-income children for free school meals. It can ease administrative burdens on school districts by reducing the number of applications they must process and verify. If effectively implemented, direct certification also makes it significantly easier for very poor children to receive free school meals. Thus, improving direct certification should be an important element of addressing food insecurity amongst children. There are, however, states whose direct certification systems are not working well. USDA will now assess states' performance in this area each year, and program administrators and anti-hunger advocates may wish to use these reports to guide their efforts to evaluate how to reach eligible children most effectively and how to strengthen their direct certification procedures over time."]

[Request #S09-10-3455]

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SCHOOL REFORM

The Case for School-Based Integration of Services: Changing the Ways Students, Families and Communities Engage With Their Schools. By Jean Baldwin Grossman and Zoua M. Vang, Public/Private Ventures. (Public/Private Ventures, Oakland, California) January 2009. 12 p.

Full text at: http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/267_publication.pdf

["It goes without question that helping these youth and their families access needed resources and services in their communities will help improve the quality of their lives. Children who receive improved health care miss fewer days of school and are healthier and more attentive while they are there. Adolescents who participate in high-quality out-of-school-time activities experience complementary and reinforcing learning opportunities. And parents who have access to needed resources and social services can improve a student's home environment by making it more stable and less stressful -- and thus more conducive to learning.... But what benefit is there to providing all of these supports in an integrated manner, via a central access point in the school building? The answer goes beyond simply increasing the supply of services."]

[Request #S09-10-3531]

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EMPLOYMENT

LABOR UNIONS

Still Open for Business: Unionization Has No Causal Effect on Firm Closures.
By John DiNardo, University of Michigan. (Economic Policy Institute, Washington, DC) March 20, 2009. 11 p.

Full text at: http://epi.3cdn.net/86c7a36112348f4103_dgm6bhgpf.pdf

["The most prominent fear employers voice regarding unionization is that it will drive them out of business. But is that fear well-founded? This brief summarizes recent research showing that unionization simply does not cause firm failure: firms that become unionized are no more likely to fail than comparable firms that remain nonunion. This finding may surprise some readers. Because unions clearly do aim to give workers a larger share of the benefits of economic growth, the possibility does exist that if they succeed in transferring income to workers and away from profits, then a firm's solvency could conceivably be threatened. However, it is also possible that even unions that successfully redistribute income from profits to wages can coexist with firms that remain viable over the long run."]

[Request #S09-10-3501]

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LOW-WAGE WORKERS

Findings for the Cleveland Achieve Model: Implementation and Early Impacts of an Employer-Based Approach to Encourage Employment Retention Among Low-Wage Workers. By Cynthia Miller and others, MDRC. (MDRC, New York, New York) December 2008.

["A common challenge for programs providing retention and advancement services is the difficulty of engaging clients, whose work and family responsibilities often leave little time to visit program staff. The key idea behind Achieve's employer-based model was to take the program to the workers, making it easier and more convenient for them to take advantage of services. The Achieve program consisted of on-site delivery of case management services, where staff met individually with clients to discuss a wide variety of issues, ranging from workplace and housing problems to transportation and child care; weekly information sessions covering such topics as time and stress management, goal-setting, budgeting, and credit repair; and trainings for the supervisors of low-wage workers."]

[Request #S09-10-3534]

Report. 179 p.

<http://www.mdrc.org/publications/513/full.pdf>

Executive Summary. 9 p.

<http://www.mdrc.org/publications/513/execsum.pdf>

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UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

California Jobs and Unemployment. By the Center for the Continuing Study of the California Economy. (The Center, Palo Alto, California) March 2009. 6 p.

Full text at: http://www.ccsce.com/pdf/Numbers-Mar09-California_Jobs.pdf

["California underperformed the nation in 2008 losing 494,000 jobs or 3.3% of the state's nonfarm wage and salary jobs between January 2008 and 2009. U.S. job losses were slightly less at 2.7%.... The current job losses, which are large and still growing, are primarily cyclical and do not represent any permanent loss of share in key sectors of the state's economic base. Most of the job losses are a result of the sharp downturn in housing activity and the state's participation in the nation's downturn in consumer spending. Of the state's 494,000 job decline between January 2008 and 2009, 179,000 jobs were lost in construction and finance, 111,000 jobs were lost in retail trade, 81,000 in manufacturing and most of the rest in business services. Job losses in the state's largest, fastest-growing and highest wage economic base sector, professional and technical services, amounted to only 800 jobs during this period."]

[Request #S09-10-3507]

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ENERGY

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Laying the Foundation for Implementing A Federal Energy Efficiency Resource Standard. By Laura A. Furrey and others, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. (The Council, Washington, DC) March 2009. 43 p.

Full text at: <http://aceee.org/pubs/e091.pdf?CFID=301223&CFTOKEN=80926155>

["The United States is currently faced with many challenges: finding ways to help Americans save money, decreasing the rate of unemployment, and battling global warming, all in the midst of an economic crisis. Energy efficiency is one of the most effective, short-term and long-term resources that can address all of these issues. The implementation of an Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) is a mechanism proven to encourage productive investments in greater levels of energy efficiency.... The energy saved through the proposed federal EERS could power almost 48 million households in 2020, accounting for about 36% of the households in the United States. Moreover, this level of energy savings will save Americans almost \$170 billion, create over 220,000 jobs and reduce greenhouse gas pollution by 262 million metric tons while eliminating the need to build 390 power plants."]

[Request #S09-10-3516]

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ENERGY POLICY

Taxing Energy in the United States: Which Fuels Does the Tax Code Favor? By Gilbert E. Metcalf, Tufts University. (Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, New York, New York) January 2009. 28 p.

Full text at: http://www.manhattan-institute.org/pdf/eper_04.pdf

["The question of how the U.S. tax code influences investment in energy generation is a crucial one. This report offers a comprehensive overview of the energy-related provisions of the U.S. tax code and their estimated impact on tax revenues. More important, this report indicates where the U.S. tax regime as a whole is likely to direct energy investment....The subsidy for fossil fuels has dropped from over 60 percent in 1997 to under 50 percent in 2007. The subsidy for renewable energy and conservation has risen from just under 40 percent to over 50 percent in the same period.... The economics of these cleaner sources depend on the further development of high-voltage transmission lines and other features of the grid. Yet the code continues to tax income realized from investments in high-voltage power transmission lines more heavily than capital gains or most ordinary income."]
[Request #S09-10-3539]

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WIND POWER

Survey of Available Data on OCS [Outer Continental Shelf] Resources and Identification of Data Gaps. By the U.S. Department of Interior. (The Department, Washington, DC) April 2009.

["Wind turbines off U.S. coastlines could potentially supply more than enough electricity to meet the nation's current demand. The biggest wind potential lies off the nation's Atlantic coast, which the Interior report estimates could produce 1,000 gigawatts of electricity -- enough to meet a quarter of the national demand.... The report also notes large potential in the Pacific, including off the California coast, but said the area presented technical challenges.... The report suggests vast oil and gas reserves off the Pacific coast: the equivalent of 10 billion to 18 billion barrels of oil.... It includes no new estimates of potential oil and gas reserves offshore and notes that some of the existing estimates are based on 25-year-old seismic studies."]
Los Angeles Times (April 3, 2009) 1.]
[Request #S09-10-3538]

Report. 219 p.

<http://www.doi.gov/ocs/report.pdf>

Executive Summary. 15 p.

<http://www.doi.gov/ocs/ExecutiveSummary-final.pdf>

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ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

AGRICULTURE

Think Globally ~ Eat Locally: San Francisco Foodshed Assessment. By Edward Thompson, Jr., American Farmland Trust, and others. (The Trust, Washington, DC) 2008. 48 p.

Full text at:

<http://www.farmland.org/programs/states/CA/Feature%20Stories/documents/ThinkGloballyEatLocally-FinalReport8-23-08.pdf>

["Local food is distinguished not only by where it originates, but also by who produced it and how. Could the City of San Francisco feed itself with local food from farms and ranches within 100 miles of the Golden Gate? Agriculture within this 'foodshed,' as it was defined for the purpose of this study, produces 20 million tons of food annually, compared with annual food consumption of 935,000 tons in San Francisco and 5.9 million tons in the Bay Area as a whole.... Despite the challenges, there are significant opportunities to increase 'eating locally' in San Francisco and the Bay Area. The local food movement in the region has as much momentum and anywhere in the country. "]

[Request #S09-10-3522]

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CLIMATE CHANGE

The Impact of Climate Change on California's Ecosystem Services. By M. Rebecca Shaw, The Nature Conservancy, and others.(California Climate Change Center, Sacramento, California) March 2009 114 p.

Full text at: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/2009publications/CEC-500-2009-025/CEC-500-2009-025-D.PDF>

["Ecosystem services are the goods and services -- fresh water, soil, biological and genetic diversity, crop pollination, carbon sequestration, climate stabilization, and recreation -- that people obtain from intact, natural systems.... This report projects the impact of future climate change on the natural provision of four key ecosystem services in California (carbon sequestration, forage production, water for instream flows for salmon, and snow recreation) and biodiversity, and the resulting change in market and non-market value of each service. Under most scenarios of climate change, the provision of all four ecosystem services will decline, leading to a decline in the economic output and well-being for the state."]

[Request #S09-10-3536]

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LAND USE

"Challenges in Reusing Vacant, Abandoned, and Contaminated Urban Properties." By Margaret Dewar and Kris Wernstedt. IN: Land Lines, (April 2009) pp. 2-6

Full text at: https://www.lincolnst.edu/pubs/dl/1579_796_Article%201.pdf

["Nonprofit and community-based developers can play important roles in reusing vacant, abandoned, and contaminated properties to help revitalize cities. These developers include community development corporations, nonprofit housing corporations, organizations that house populations with special needs (such as senior citizens, homeless people, and others in transition), faith-based developers often operating from churches, and national organizations such as Habitat for Humanity. These sites are often located in low-income areas of cities that have lost population and jobs, and where the long-term decline in demand for housing and for commercial and industrial property has led to abandonment. Nonprofit and community-based developers are usually the only developers interested in investing in real estate projects in areas with chronically weak demand."]

[Request #S09-10-3509]

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GENERAL GOVERNMENT

COURTS

Findings of the Study of California Class Action Litigation, 2000-2006: First Interim Report. By Hilary Hehman, Office of Court Research, Administrative Office of the Courts. (The Office, San Francisco, California) March 2009. 46 p.

Full text at: <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/documents/class-action-lit-study.pdf>

["The Study of California Class Action Litigation was undertaken in collaboration with the University of California Hastings College of the Law to provide previously unavailable data about class action litigation in the state, as well as to promote more informed policy and practice discussions about this often controversial litigation tool. The first interim report includes filings and disposition analyses, as well as an evaluation of the impact of the Class Action Fairness Act on the California state judiciary."]

[Request #S09-10-3458]

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PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

High-Risk Update, Human Resources Management: A Significant Number of State Employees Are Beginning to Retire, While Certain Departments That Provide Critical State Services Lack Workforce and Succession Plans. By the California Bureau of State Audits. (The Bureau, Sacramento, California) March 2009. 40 p.

Full text at: <http://www.bsa.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2008-605.pdf>

["The State is currently facing, and will continue to face, the retirement of a significant number of today's workers in both leadership and rank and file positions. An aging workforce, coupled with an average retirement age of around 60, suggests that 42 percent of today's state employees in leadership positions -- nearly 13,000 -- may retire over the next seven years.... Regardless of the precise timing of these retirements, the fact remains that these employees will eventually retire and planning for these retirements is prudent to ensure continued delivery of state services. Unfortunately, California is just in the beginning stages of such planning efforts, and our review found that other states have done more to develop their workforce and succession plans."]

[Request #S09-10-3520]

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REGULATIONS

Why "Competition" is Failing to Protect Consumers: The Limits of Choice in California's Residential Telecommunications Market. By Trevor R. Roycroft. Prepared for The Utility Reform Network. (The Network, San Francisco, California) March 2009.

["Competition would protect consumers. The market would self-regulate. Prices would come down. That, at least, was the plan when the California Public Utilities Commission lifted price caps on phone companies in 2006. 'However, instead of price competition, California consumers have experienced an ongoing stream of rate increases, with the most recent increases for basic service likely to cost consumers over \$100 million per year,' says a report" Orange County Register (March 26, 2009) 1.] [Request #S09-10-3514]

Report. 69 p.

<http://www.turn.org/downloads/TURN-Telco-Competition-Is-Failing-Full-Report.pdf>

Brief. 10 p.

<http://www.turn.org/downloads/TURN-Telco-Competition-Is-Failing-Brief-Report.pdf>

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VOTERS & VOTING

No Time to Vote: Challenges Facing America's Overseas Military Voters. By Kil Huh and others, Pew Center on the States. (The Center, Washington, DC) January 2009.

["The likelihood of a ballot being counted in time depends on which state a soldier is from, and whether a state's process relies more on the U.S. Postal Service or electronic means, such as fax or e-mail.... The report found that 16 states do not give overseas military personnel enough time to vote. Some states allow completed ballots to be returned by fax or e-mail. Six of those 19 states, however -- Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii and Rhode Island -- were still faulted in the report because their voting timeframe gave overseas voters no other option but to send in their completed ballot using fax or e-mail, a method that some experts say has the potential for privacy and security violations." Stateline.org (January 8, 2009) 1.] [Request #S09-10-3259]

Report. 47 p.

http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Election_reform/NTTV_Report_Web.pdf

Summary. 1 p.

http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_report_detail.aspx?id=47922&category=488

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HEALTH

HEALTH CARE

A Better Way to Generate and Use Comparative-Effectiveness Research. By Michael F. Cannon, The Cato Institute. (The Institute, Washington, DC) February 2009. 24 p.

Full text at: <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa632.pdf>

["Americans spend \$700 billion annually on medical care that provides no value. The need for 'comparative-effectiveness research' is great. Patients, providers, and purchasers typically lack necessary information to distinguish between high- and low-value services. Current lack of comparative-effectiveness research is due more to government failure than to market failure. A way to generate comparative-effectiveness information would be for Congress to eliminate government activities that suppress private production and let workers and Medicare enrollees control the money that purchases their health insurance. Congress should require states to recognize other states' licenses for medical professionals and insurance products. That laissez-faire approach would both increase comparative-effectiveness research and increase the likelihood that patients and providers would use it."]

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HEALTH CARE POLICY

The Path to a High Performance U.S. Health System: A 2020 Vision and the Policies to Pave the Way. By The Commonwealth Fund Commission on a High Performance Health System. (The Fund, New York, New York) February 2009.

["This report offers recommendations for a comprehensive set of insurance, payment, and system reforms that could guarantee affordable coverage for all by 2012, improve health outcomes, and slow health spending growth by \$3 trillion by 2020 -- if enacted now to start in 2010. Central to the Commission's strategy is establishing a national insurance exchange that offers a choice of private plans and a new public plan, with reforms to make coverage affordable, ensure access, and lower administrative costs. Building on this foundation, the report recommends policies to change the way the nation pays for care, invest in information systems to improve quality and safety, and promote health. By stimulating competition and delivery system changes aimed at providing more effective and efficient care, the policies could yield higher value and substantial savings for families, businesses, and the public sector."]

[Request #S09-10-3370]

Report. 122 p.

[Report](#)

Executive Summary. 28 p.

[executive summary](#)

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MEDICAID

Medicaid 101: A Primer for State Legislators. By The Council of State Governments. (The Council, Lexington, Kentucky) January 2009. 30 p.

Full text at: http://www.csg.org/pubs/Documents/Medicaid_Primer_final_screen.pdf

["Medicaid is the largest health insurance program in the country, covering as many as 62 million low-income Americans over the course of a year, including one of every four children.... It is incredibly complicated and different in each state, with no two Medicaid programs alike. Policies vary from state to state and the population Medicaid serves is incredibly diverse.... The Medicaid program is loved by few, criticized by many and misunderstood by most. This primer will help you understand the basics and dispel some myths often associated with Medicaid."]

[Request #S09-10-3426]

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NURSES

Assessing the Impact of California's Nurse Staffing Ratios on Hospitals and Patient Care. By Joan Spetz and others, Center for California Health Workforce Studies, University of California San Francisco. (California Healthcare Foundation, Oakland, California) February 2009. 10 p

Full text at:

<http://www.chcf.org/documents/hospitals/AssessingCANurseStaffingRatios.pdf>

["In 2004, California began requiring that acute-care hospitals maintain minimum ratios between nurses and patients, the first state in the nation to do so. This issue brief examines how California's nurse staffing regulations affected different types of hospitals in order to meet the ratio requirements....whether the ratios influenced hospitals' financial performance... and what effect they had on improving patient care. The research combined quantitative and qualitative analysis interviews with executives and other management staff at 12 acute-care hospitals. Results show the ratios have had no impact on the quality measures that are associated with nursing care. The study found no relationship between the staffing regulations and the overall decline in hospital operating margins that occurred after the law went into effect."] [Request #S09-10-3386]

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HOUSING

REAL ESTATE LOANS

Foreclosing A Dream: State Laws Deprive Homeowners of Basic Protections. By John Rao and Geoff Walsh, National Consumer Law Center. (The Center, Washington, DC) February 2009. 60 p.

Full text at: <http://www.consumerlaw.org/issues/foreclosure/content/FORE-Report0209.pdf>

["While many states have taken steps in recent years to strengthen the rights of renters, only a handful of states have updated their home foreclosure laws, which are now 'tilted against homeowners' and acting as a little-understood factor that is helping to accelerate the U.S. home foreclosure crisis. Based on a survey of existing state laws, the report identifies some of the most antiquated state law provisions, including 'fast track' foreclosures without any court oversight in 30 states and no requirement of direct notification to homeowners in 33 states upon the initiation of foreclosure proceedings.... The bottom line is that most state laws are not part of the foreclosure crisis solution today; they are a big part of the problem. While reform of state foreclosure laws will not end the current foreclosure crisis, it can significantly reduce the number of foreclosures."]

[Request #S09-10-3512]

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Sustainable Mortgage Modifications: Setting Clear Benchmarks to Measure Progress and Identifying Possible Next Steps to Contain the Foreclosure Crisis. By Andrew Jakobovics, Center for American Progress. (The Center, Washington, DC) March 2009. 18 p.

Full text at:

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/03/pdf/mortgage_modifications.pdf

["The Obama administration's Making Home Affordable program sets out clear guidelines and calculations for participating mortgage service companies to modify mortgages in order help worthy homeowners stay in their homes. The plan is based on the simple truth that foreclosures are costly for nearly all involved: homeowners, mortgage lenders and investors, and communities across the country.... Because we do not have the luxury of waiting before evaluating the new program's success or failure, the Obama administration needs to measure itself against basic metrics for success both for individual mortgage servicers and the program as a whole. The metrics detailed in this paper should be established within the next three months, in keeping with the Obama administration's commitment to efficient and effective use of taxpayer resources."][Request #S09-10-3524]

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HUMAN SERVICES

CHILD CARE

We CAN Do Better: 2009 Update: NACCRRA's Ranking of State Child Care Center Regulation and Oversight. By the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. (The Association, Arlington, Virginia) March 2009.

["Over 11 million children under age 5 spend an average of 36 hours a week in non-parental care settings. Almost two-thirds of these children are in center-based care. State child care licensing regulations govern the health, safety and learning opportunities for these children. Oversight of licensing regulations determines how well the regulations are applied. Weak regulations allow children to be in child care settings that may not be safe, healthy or developmentally appropriate. Relatively strong regulations but weak oversight renders the regulations meaningless since compliance is unknown. This report examined state child care center licensing regulations and the oversight of those regulations. NACCRRA scored and ranked states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense on 10 regulation and 5 oversight benchmarks."][Request #S09-10-3537]

Report. 161 p.

<http://issuu.com/naccrra/docs/we-can-do-better-2009-update?mode=embed&layout=white>

Executive summary. 11 p.

<http://www.naccrra.org/docs/publications/supporting-docs/we-can-do-better-2009-update/executive-summary.pdf>

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CHILDREN

Silent Victims: The Impact of Parental Incarceration on Children. By Natasha H. Williams, National Center For Primary Care, Morehouse School of Medicine. (The Center, Atlanta, Georgia) March 2009. 20 p.

Full text at:

http://www.communityvoices.org/Uploads/Silent_Victims_The_Impact_of_Parental_Incarceration_on_Children_00108_00221.pdf

["Black children were nearly nine times more likely to have a parent in prison than white children and Hispanic children were 3 times as likely as while children.... The incarceration of a parent has a tremendous impact on the children. Even though research has been limited, though increasing, available information clearly shows that children experience social, emotional, and developmental problems as a result of a parent's incarceration. It is extremely important to recognize that much of the research to date in this area focuses on the incarcerated mother because they are predominately the primary caregiver. Moreover, as the rate of incarcerated women increases, the impact on their children will be more traumatic due to their fundamental responsibilities as the primary caregivers. However, more needs to be known about the men who are incarcerated that are fathers as well."]
[Request #S09-10-3504]

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EARNED INCOME TAX CREDITS

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Refund Anticipation Loans. By the Children's Defense Fund. (The Fund, Washington, DC) March 2009. 8 p.

Full text at: <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/ral-report-2009.pdf>

["Increased education and advocacy to expand awareness of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and promote its greater use have encouraged millions of working families to claim essential benefits they have earned. However, the full potential of the EITC to decrease poverty has not been attained. For tax year 2006, tax preparation fees, Revenue Anticipation Loans (RAL) and other commercial products diverted a total of \$3.1 billion in EITC benefits from workers and their families.... EITC recipients are more likely than other tax refund recipients to accelerate receipt of their tax funds. In fact, they are more than six and a half times as likely to secure a RAL as taxpayers who did not file for the EITC. This wide

disparity is attributable in part to the aggressive marketing of RALs to the working poor and minorities within their communities."]
[Request #S09-10-3508]

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TEEN PREGNANCY

Estimated Percentage of Females Who Will Become Teen Mothers: Differences Across States. By Kate Perper and Jennifer Manlove, Child Trends. (Child Trends, Washington, DC) March 2009. 4 p.

Full text at: http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2009_03_19_RB_PercentTeenMothers.pdf

["In 2006, the teen birth rate rose for the first time since 1991. Between 2005 and 2006, the birth rate increased 3 percent for teens aged 15-17 and 4 percent for teens aged 18-19. Teenage childbearing has negative consequences both for the mothers involved and for their children. Calculating the percentage of females who are estimated to become teen mothers provides additional information that will allow policymakers and program providers to better understand how many young women in their respective states are at risk of early childbearing.... States vary widely in the estimated percentage of females who will have a baby during their teen years, ranging from less than 10 percent in states with the lowest teen birth rates to 30 percent in the state with the highest teen birth rate."]

[Request #S09-10-3511]

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TRANSPORTATION

FINANCING

Local and Regional Funding Mechanisms for Public Transportation. By Cambridge Systematics and others. (Transportation Research Board, Washington, DC) 2009. 81 p.

Full text at: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_129.pdf

["The report explores a series of transit funding mechanisms with a primary focus on traditional tax- and fee-based funding; and common business, activity, and related funding sources. The report includes an online regional funding database that provides an extensive list of funding sources that are in use or have the prospect of being used at the local and regional level to support public transportation. A user manual for the database is also available online." TRB Newsletter (March 11, 2009) 1.]

[Request #S09-10-3517]

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HIGH-SPEED RAIL

High Speed Rail: Future Development Will Depend on Addressing Financial and Other Challenges and Establishing a Clear Federal Role. By the U.S. Government Accountability Office. GAO-09-317. (The Office, Washington, DC) March 2009. 108 p.

Full text at: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09317.pdf>

["Available federal loan programs can support only a fraction of potential high speed rail project costs. Without substantial public sector commitment, private sector participation is difficult to secure. The challenge of sustaining public support and stakeholder consensus is compounded by long project lead times, by numerous stakeholders, and by the absence of an established institutional framework.... The recently enacted Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 will likely increase the federal role in the development of high speed rail, as will the newly enacted American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. In the United States, federal involvement with high speed rail to date has been limited."]

[Request #S09-10-3513]

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