

Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

Studies in the News is going on hiatus for the holidays. We will resume publication on
Wednesday, January 9, 2013.

Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Realignment progress update

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

A portrait of the 100 year-old population

ECONOMY

State taxation in the 21st century economy

EDUCATION

CA Community Colleges transfers update

Restructuring CA adult education

EMPLOYMENT

Highlights of women's earnings in 2011

ENERGY

Audit finds transparency lacking in renewable energy costs

ENVIRONMENT

2012: Hottest recorded temperatures in U.S.

HEALTH

U.S. private health insurance costs breakdown

HOUSING

FHA annual report to Congress: Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund

HUMAN SERVICES

CA has the highest number of people without health insurance

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

GAO Report: more testing is needed for commercial drivers

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

One Year Into Realignment: Progress Stalls, Stronger Incentives Needed. By Mike Males.

Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice. Dec. 2012. 8 p.

http://www.cjcj.org/files/Realignment_update_Dec_12_2012.pdf

"The pace of realignment was expected to slow after initial policies realigned the lowest-level offenders from state prison to local management. However, realignment has stalled and even reversed slightly as the number of new admissions to state prisons rose in the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2012.... One solution ... is for the state to charge each county a substantial fee based on the number of their lower-level offenders ... who are housed in prison and the seriousness of their offense. In particular, strong fiscal

disincentives could discourage counties from using state prison for the 2,000 offenders imprisoned in the 3rd quarter of 2012 for ... locally manageable crimes.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Centenarians: 2010. By Julie Meyer, et al. U.S. Census Bureau. Dec. 2012. 24 p.
<https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/reports/c2010sr-03.pdf>

In 2010, nearly 6,000 of California’s residents were centenarians, or people aged 100 years and older. “Centenarians ... are both rare and distinct from the rest of the older population. This report provides an updated portrait of the centenarian population based on age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, and living arrangements information collected during the 2010 Census. It also describes the geographic distribution of this population.”

ECONOMY

States Should Embrace 21st Century Economy by Extending Sales Taxes to Digital Goods and Services. By Michael Mazerov. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Dec. 13, 2012. 25 p.
<http://www.cbpp.org/files/12-13-12sfp.pdf>

“States are losing more and more revenue each year from a failure to require the payment of sales taxes when goods and services are sold and delivered online. The tax exempt status in many states of ‘digital goods and services’ – a fast-growing sector of the economy that ranges from movie downloads to online dating services to computer software – costs states well over \$300 million per year, and the price tag is rising.... In most cases, these tax exemptions exist not for any policy reason but rather because sales tax laws and regulations have not been updated to reflect the Internet age.”

EDUCATION

Meeting Compliance but Missing the Mark. The Campaign for College Opportunity. Nov. 2012. 16 p.
<http://www.collegecampaign.org/>

California Community College students traditionally have had to overcome obstacles when transferring to the California public university system, especially due to the frequently-changing and poorly-communicated transfer requirements. In the last two years, the majority of the community colleges have prepared new associate degrees for transfer to the California State University, but these efforts are not universally accepted by the various state university campuses. More work needs to be done to clarify system goals and complete the required program changes at both the community college and university levels.

Restructuring California’s Adult Education System. Legislative Analyst’s Office. Dec. 5, 2012. 28 p.
<http://lao.ca.gov/laoapp/PubDetails.aspx?id=2672>

“This report lays out a vision and roadmap for a more efficient and effective system. Our package of recommendations includes: (1) a state-subsidized system focused on adult education’s core mission; (2) common, statewide definitions that clearly differentiate between adult education and collegiate education; (3) a common set of policies for faculty and students at adult schools and community colleges; (4) a dedicated stream of funding that creates incentives for cooperation among providers, with new adult education funds allocated based on regional needs; and (5) an integrated data system that tracks student outcomes and helps the public hold providers accountable for results.”

EMPLOYMENT

Highlights of Women's Earnings in 2011. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. U.S. Dept. of Labor. Oct. 2012. 91 p.

<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpswom2011.pdf>

“In 2011, women who were full-time wage and salary workers had median usual weekly earnings of \$684, about 82% of median earnings for male full-time wage and salary workers (\$832).... Earnings differences between women and men were widest for Whites and for Asians. White women earned 82% as much as their male counterparts in 2011, while Asian women earned 77% as much as their male counterparts. In comparison, both Black and Hispanic women had median earnings that were 91% of those of their male counterparts.... Earnings growth has been sharpest for White women, outpacing that of their Black and Hispanic counterparts.”

ENERGY

Rewiring California: Integrating Agendas for Energy Reform. Little Hoover Commission. Dec. 2012. 106 p.

http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/214/Report214_Final%20Complete.pdf

The Little Hoover Commission's report “states that California's energy policy is being set by a far-too-diverse group of agencies. It also charges that the bungled energy market deregulation of the 1990s leaves the system open to gaming by corporations. The Commission calls for greater transparency in discussions of the cost of renewable energy, saying that California's ratepayers should know ahead of time just what the impact on their wallets will be of the state's meeting its Renewable Portfolio Standard requirements - as well as changes in the cost of living in California due to climate change if those standards aren't met.” (KCET, Dec. 3, 2012).

ENVIRONMENT

The Hottest U.S. Year on Record. Climate Central. Dec. 2012. 8 p.

<http://www.climatecentral.org/pdfs/warmest2012v3.pdf>

“2012 pushes 1998 into second place, followed by 2006, 1934 and 1999. In line with the global warming trend spurred by steadily rising carbon emissions, seven of the top 10 warmest years ever recorded in the 48 states have occurred in the past 15 years.” The 2012 average temperature for the continental United States is projected to be 55.34°F, beating by more than 1°F the previous record of 54.32°F, set in 1998.

HEALTH

Spending for Private Health Insurance in the United States. National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation. Jan. 2013. 16 p.

<http://www.nihcm.org/component/content/article/326-publications-health-care-spending/722-spending-for-private-health-insurance-in-the-united-states>

“In 2010 private health insurance companies spent an average of 88 cents of every premium dollar purchasing health care services for their enrollees, with most of this spending paying for inpatient care and for physician and other clinical services. The remaining 12 cents of the premium dollar was used to cover plan administrative expenses, rate credits and dividends, taxes, contributions to reserves, and profits.... Numerous studies have shown that it is the higher prices being paid to providers for a unit of

service – rather than an increase in utilization or a shift to a more complex mix of services – that has been the main factor behind the escalating spending for health care services in recent years.”

HOUSING

Annual Report to Congress: Fiscal Year 2012 Financial Status – FHA Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund. U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. Nov. 2012. 64 p.

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=F12MMIFundRepCong111612.pdf>

The Federal Housing Administration’s Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund’s capital reserve ratio fell to a negative 1.44%. If attempts to alleviate this problem by minimizing losses due to foreclosure or increasing the premium borrowers pay on FHA loans do not work, a federal bailout may be necessary.

HUMAN SERVICES

California’s Uninsured: Treading Water. California HealthCare Foundation. Dec. 2012. 24 p.

<http://www.chcf.org/~media/MEDIA%20LIBRARY%20Files/PDF/C/PDF%20CaliforniaUninsured2012.pdf>

“This annual Almanac report provides data on those who are uninsured and their income levels, work status, age, and ethnicity.... In 2011, California had the largest total number of people under 65 years old without health insurance - 7.1 million - of any state in the nation. The percentage of Californians who are uninsured has risen steadily over the past two decades; the state now has the seventh largest percentage of residents without coverage in the U.S. The percentage of Californians who have employer-based coverage continued to fall, dropping from 65% in 1987 to 52% in 2011. While public insurance has partially covered this gap, almost 22% of Californians remain uninsured.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Highway Safety: Selected Cases of Commercial Drivers with Potentially Disqualifying Impairments. Government Accountability Office. GAO-13-13. Nov. 30, 2012. 21 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/650388.pdf>

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulations require that commercial drivers be tested regularly for drug and alcohol use and certified for medical fitness every two years. The 2012 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act requires additional measures be implemented in 2013 and 2014 to prevent “high-risk” drivers from serving as commercial drivers. This GAO study demonstrates that certain administrative data could be better utilized to identify and potentially disqualify from commercial licensure individuals with disqualifying impairments, such as those relating to epilepsy, drugs, or alcohol. By January 2014, federal law will require by January 2014 that all states electronically store and maintain medical certificates for all commercial license holders.

About *Studies in the News*

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