



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Anatomy of Discretion: An Analysis of Prosecutorial Decision Making. By Bruce Fredrick, et al. Vera Institute of Justice. Dec. 2012.

Full Report. 429 p.: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/240334.pdf>

Summary Report. 32 p.: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/240335.pdf>

This report “goes beyond previous research that mainly explored relationships between specific case-level factors and case outcomes. It examines the processes that prosecutors use to reach their decisions and the contextual factors that influence those decisions – prosecutors’ characteristics, such as gender, experience, supervisory role, unit, caseload, and preferred plea bargaining strategies; office structures and policies; resource constraints; and social context (relationships among participants in the courtroom, for example). Furthermore, the new research explores how prosecutors’ conceptions of justice and fairness influence their decision making.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***Sticky Ages: Why Is Age 65 Still a Retirement Peak?* By Norma B. Coe, et al. Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. Jan. 2013. 33 p.**

http://crr.bc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/wp_2013-2.pdf

“When Social Security’s Full Retirement Age (FRA) increased to age 66 for recent retirees, the peak retirement age increased with it. However, a large share of people continue to claim their Social Security benefits at age 65. This paper explores two potential explanations for the “stickiness” of age 65 as a claiming age: Medicare eligibility and workers’ lack of knowledge about their future Social Security benefits.... On the question of whether misinformation about Social Security benefits may drive individuals to claim at age 65, we find that some individuals are unable to accurately forecast their retirement benefits. However, our analysis suggests that there is no relationship between this confusion and the age 65 peak for claiming Social Security.”

ECONOMY

“State Policy Reports Special Issue: Fiscal Threats to States.” *Federal Funds Information for States*, vol. 30, no. 20 (Nov. 2012) 16 p.

http://www.ffis.org/state_policy_reports/vol-30_is-20 (Available in the California State Library)

In June 2011, the State Budget Crisis Task Force was developed to examine the fiscal challenges confronting state and local governments. Its research identified six specific threats to states’ short- and long-term fiscal sustainability. Research focuses on six large U.S. states, including California. The identified threats include Medicaid spending growth, underfunded pension systems, and state budget laws and practices. This issue updates findings from the six focus states.

EDUCATION

***New School Year Brings More Cuts in State Funding for Schools.* By Phil Oliff, et al. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Sep. 4, 2012. 14 p.**

<http://www.cbpp.org/files/9-4-12sfp.pdf>

“States have made steep cuts to education funding since the start of the recession and, in many states, those cuts deepened over the last year. Elementary and high schools are receiving less state funding in the 2012-13 school year than they did last year in 26 states, and in 35 states school funding now stands below 2008 levels...” Between FY08 and FY13, California reduced per pupil spending by 17.3%. Between FY12 and FY13, California is projected to increase per-pupil spending by \$308 per year due to the passage and enactment of Proposition 30.

EMPLOYMENT

Data Brief: Black Employment and Unemployment in November 2012. UC Berkeley Labor Center. Dec. 7, 2012. 21 p.

http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/blackworkers/monthly/bwreport_2012-12-07_55.pdf

“The unemployment rate for Blacks was 13.2% last month.... This rate was a decrease from October, when unemployment in the Black community was 14.3%. For the nation as a whole, unemployment was 7.7% in the month of November; this was a decrease from October when the national unemployment rate stood at 7.9%. Among whites, unemployment was 6.8%; among Latinos, unemployment was 10.0%. Comparable October 2012 figures were 7.0% and 10.0% respectively.”

ENERGY

Study of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources. United States Environmental Protection Agency. Dec. 2012. 278 p.

<http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/pdfs/hf-report20121214.pdf>

“The United States has vast reserves of natural gas that are commercially viable as a result of advances in horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing technologies.... However, as the use of hydraulic fracturing has increased, so have concerns about its potential human health and environmental impacts, especially for drinking water.... The purpose of the study is to assess the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, if any, and to identify the driving factors that may affect the severity and frequency of such impacts.... This report describes 18 research projects underway to answer these research questions and presents the progress made as of September 2012 for each of the projects.”

ENVIRONMENT

“Anticoagulant Rodenticides on our Public and Community Lands: Spatial Distribution of Exposure and Poisoning of a Rare Forest Carnivore.” By Mourad W. Gabriel, et al. *PLoS ONE*, vol. 7, no. 7 (Jul. 13, 2012) 15 p.

<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0040163>

Illegal marijuana cultivation has been pointed to as the likely source for widespread poisonings of a rare forest-dwelling carnivore called the Fisher (*Martes pennanti*). Marijuana growers use the commercial rodenticide Carbofuran to kill small animals that gnaw on the plants. The chemical enters the food chain when Fishers eat poisoned rodents, or when they take in the poison directly. Carbofuran is often mixed with tuna or other food to make it more palatable to animals.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Reading Habits in Different Communities. By Carolyn Miller, et al. Pew Research Center. Dec. 20, 2012. 40 p.

<http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2012/12/20/reading-habits-in-different-communities/>

“The current report ... explores the general reading habits and e-reading habits of Americans, yet it does so through the lens of different community types. Its focus is how people living in urban, suburban, and rural communities compare with one another in their reading patterns, interest in e-reading, and library use habits. Specifically, this report takes a closer look across communities at similarities and differences in how much people read, what they read, how they read and how they use and value their local public library.”

HEALTH

Early Assessment Finds that CMS Faces Obstacles in Overseeing the Medicare EHR Incentive Program. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General. Nov. 2012. 38 p.
<https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-05-11-00250.pdf>

“Advocates contend that electronic records systems will improve patient care and lower costs through better coordination of medical services, and the Obama administration is spending billions of dollars to encourage doctors and hospitals to switch to electronic records to track patient care. But the report says Medicare, which is charged with managing the incentive program that encourages the adoption of electronic records, has failed to put in place adequate safeguards to ensure that information being provided by hospitals and doctors about their electronic records systems is accurate.” (*New York Times*, Nov. 29, 2012).

HOUSING

Transit-Oriented Development in the States. By Douglas Shinkle. National Conference of State Legislatures. Dec. 2012. 38 p.
http://www.ncsl.org/Documents/transportation/TOD_Final.pdf

More metropolitan areas and states are looking to develop transit-oriented development (TOD). They are creating more walkable communities and building homes and businesses in closer proximity to transit. This report summarizes city, state and federal statutes and initiatives concerning TOD, with emphasis on zoning laws, funding and links to improved sustainability.

HUMAN SERVICES

More Than a Roof: How California Can End Youth Homelessness. By Shahera Hyatt. California Homeless Youth Project. Jan. 2013. 28 p.
<http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/More-Than-a-Roof-FINAL.pdf>

“It is crucial that the State of California pursue strategies to end youth homelessness through prevention, supportive services, housing, and improved data collection. A State Action Plan to End Youth Homelessness is a strategy to bring together public and private sector partners to exercise leadership and establish ending youth homelessness as a priority in California. This State Action Plan is a compilation, synthesis, and adaption of recommendations and strategies identified in many reports and studies.... The Plan is organized into ten subject areas that came up consistently in the literature on youth homelessness, followed by multiple action steps to achieve each overarching goal.”

2012 Kids Count Data Book. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2012. 60 p.
http://www.childrennow.org/uploads/documents/casey_data_book_2012.pdf

“The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s 2012 Kids Count Data Book shows both promising progress and discouraging setbacks for the nation’s children: While their academic achievement and health improved in most states, their economic well-being continued to decline.... [W]e developed a more comprehensive index to measure child well-being and rank states. The new Kids Count index includes child-level indicators across four domains: (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community.” Of 50 states, California ranked 41st in overall child well-being, 45th in economic well-being, 43rd in education, 23rd in health, and 42nd in family and community.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

“Notice of Proposed Rulemaking: Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Event Data Recorders.” By National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S. Dept. of Transportation. *Federal Register*, vol. 77, no. 240 (Dec. 13, 2012) pp. 74144-74159.

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-12-13/pdf/2012-30082.pdf>

NCSL listing of state statutes on Event Data Recorders: <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/telecom/privacy-of-data-from-event-data-recorders.aspx>

“Federal regulators are proposing that new automobiles sold in the United States after September 2014 come equipped with black boxes, so-called ‘event data recorders’ that chronicle how fast a vehicle was traveling, the number of passengers and even a car’s location. While many automakers have voluntarily installed the devices already, the National Transportation Safety Agency wants to hear your comments by February 11 on its proposal mandating them in all vehicles. Congress has empowered the agency to set motor-vehicle-safety rules.” (*wired.com*). California is not one of the 13 states currently with regulations in place regarding black boxes in private passenger vehicles according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, which has tracked the issue since 2005.

About *Studies in the News*

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