



Studies in the News

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Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Post-realignment corrections spending shows mixed results

ECONOMY

The real cost for families to make ends meet

EDUCATION

The importance of school principals in early education

EMPLOYMENT

Redefining the STEM workforce

ENERGY

Natural gas pipeline safety: an analysis

ENVIRONMENT

CA invasive species require management programs

Contaminated beaches: report and interactive map

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Court determines GIS mapping files are public records

HEALTH

3-4 million Californians may fall between the cracks of Medicaid and ACA

HUMAN SERVICES

Lack of coordination may hinder safety net services

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

VA indexes the literature on PTSD

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Local transit agencies struggle to manage capital assets

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

A Mixed Picture: State Corrections Spending after the 2011 Realignment. California Budget Project. June 2013. 10 p.

http://cbp.org/pdfs/2013/130625_A_Mixed_Picture_Corrections.pdf

“State corrections spending after the 2011 realignment presents a mixed picture. On the one hand, realignment has resulted in significant savings in the state corrections budget. In 2013-14, for example, the state projects General Fund savings of \$1.3 billion due to transferring responsibility for low-level offenders and parolees to counties. On the other hand, these state corrections savings are mostly offset

by new county corrections expenditures – a projected \$1.1 billion in 2013-14 – that are funded with dedicated revenues provided by the 2011 realignment.... [W]hile alignment holds great promise, it should be viewed as one major step in transforming California’s criminal justice system, rather than as the final stage of the process.”

ECONOMY

What Families Need to Get By: The 2013 Update of EPI’s Family Budget Calculator. By Elise Gould, et al. Economic Policy Institute. July 3, 2013. 10 p.
<http://www.epi.org/files/2013/ib368-basic-family-budgets.pdf>

“Poverty thresholds are generally national income levels used to measure the number and share of Americans who are economically deprived. Conceptually, these measures are important metrics...” that fail to measure the hardships endured by families living on minimum wages. The real costs to make ends meet are measured for six family types in 615 specific locations throughout the U.S., accounting for the variations in cost of housing, food, child care, transportation, health care and other necessities.

EDUCATION

Leading for Early Success: Building School Principals’ Capacity to Lead High-Quality Early Education. By Amanda Szekely. National Governors Association. May 2013. 10 p.
<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2013/1306LeadingForEarlySuccessPaper.pdf>

“Decades of research find that effective school leadership and access to high-quality early education are two of the most important determinants of educational outcomes. School principals affect both teacher and student performance and play an important role in turning around troubled schools. High-quality education, from prekindergarten (pre-K) through third grade builds foundational knowledge and skills that prepare students for long-term success.... This issue brief makes the case for why governors should consider building elementary school principals’ capacity as P–3 leaders and outlines specific state policy strategies for accomplishing this goal.”

EMPLOYMENT

The Hidden STEM Economy. By Jonathan Rothwell, Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings. June 2013. 38 p.
<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2013/06/10%20stem%20economy%20rothwell/thehiddenstemeconomy610>

“Workers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields play a direct role in driving economic growth. Yet, because of how the STEM economy has been defined, policymakers have mainly focused on supporting workers with at least a bachelor’s (BA) degree, overlooking a strong potential workforce of those with less than a BA.... Half of all STEM jobs are available to workers without a four-year college degree, and these jobs pay \$53,000 on average – a wage 10% higher than jobs with similar educational requirements.... STEM jobs that require at least a bachelor’s degree are highly clustered in certain metropolitan areas, while sub-bachelor’s STEM jobs are prevalent in every large metropolitan area.”

ENERGY

Gas Pipeline Safety: Guidance and More Information Needed before Using Risk-Based Reassessment Intervals. U.S. Government Accountability Office. GAO-13-557. June 27, 2013. 46 p.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-577>

“About 300,000 miles of gas transmission pipelines cross the United States, carrying natural gas from processing facilities to communities.... The Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 established the gas integrity management program, which required gas transmission pipeline operators to assess the integrity of their pipeline segments in high consequence areas by December 2012 and reassess them at least every 7 years.” This report reviews a GAO analysis of the current assessment process and the potential effects of implementing risk-based reassessment intervals, recommending that more information should be collected to help decision-makers better understand the resource requirements of such a change.

ENVIRONMENT

Overview of Invasive Species Management in California. Legislative Analyst’s Office. May 9, 2013. 9 p.
<http://www.lao.ca.gov/handouts/resources/2013/Invasive-Species-Overview-050913.pdf>

Currently, there are 1,700 invasive species that pose a potential risk to California’s ecosystem and economy. Some species are problematic because of their effect on human activity, such as pests that damage agricultural crops or harm water quality. Other species affect fragile ecosystems. Invasive species management focuses first on the deterrence of these organisms. Secondly, the strategy is to detect, control, eradicate, and finally restore the ecosystems affected by invasive species. This report outlines the management programs undertaken by various state agencies, with an emphasis on budget constraints.

Testing the Waters 2013: A Guide to Water Quality at Vacation Beaches. National Resources Defense Council. Summer 2013. 12 p.
http://www.nrdc.org/water/oceans/ttw/2013/ttw2013_Executive_Overview.pdf
Interactive map: <http://www.nrdc.org/water/oceans/ttw/default.asp>

A trip to the beach is a common way for Americans to have fun during the summer months. Unfortunately, many beaches can be contaminated with pathogens such as bacteria and viruses. Storm water pollution, untreated sewage spills and overflows are the most common causes of such contamination. The NRDC has published a new report that analyzes monitoring data and provides state-by-state reporting on beach programs. The interactive map enables a comparison of beaches along the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, as well as the Great Lakes. Thirteen beaches received a 5-star rating for cleanliness, three of which are in California.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Sierra Club vs. Superior Court of Orange County, et al. California State Supreme Court. S194708. July 8, 2013. 25 p.
<http://www.courts.ca.gov/opinions/documents/S194708.PDF>

In a recent California Supreme Court decision, the justices determined that digital mapping files, known as geographic information systems (GIS), must be released under the state’s public records law. The Sierra Club filed a request for GIS mapping data from Orange County, but the county sought to charge the organization a licensing fee. The court declared that these files are public records, and should be made available “at a cost not to exceed the direct cost of duplication.”

HEALTH

New Research Further Strengthens Evidence of the Benefits of the Health Care Safety Net.
By William H. Dow, et al. UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education. May 2013. 6 p.
http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/healthcare/benefits_health_care_safety_net13.pdf

Pointing to research literature that shows children and adults generally benefit from health insurance, and that adults benefit from expanded Medicaid coverage, the authors state that “[i]mplementation in 2014 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Medicaid expansion and exchange subsidies will result in millions fewer uninsured Californians, which will undoubtedly improve health status among the affected populations. However, between three and four million low-income Californians are likely to remain uninsured, primarily because they will not be eligible for either expanded Medicaid or affordable private health insurance.”

HUMAN SERVICES

A Stronger Safety Net for America's Children. By John Quintero. First Focus. June 2013. 25 p.
<http://www.firstfocus.net/sites/default/files/A%20Stronger%20Safety%20Net.pdf>

“[P]ublic safety net programs and work supports are cash and noncash resources provided to households with incomes below specified levels.... Shared responsibility for the administration of public programs ... often creates problems in coordinating programs among various governmental agencies. Another consequence is that program rules, eligibility criteria, and benefit levels vary markedly from one state to another.... [A] variety of administrative and policy factors have constrained the effectiveness of such initiatives, thereby resulting in sizable numbers of low-income people failing to receive all of the assistance for which they are eligible.”

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

The PILOTS Database: An Electronic Index to Traumatic Stress Literature. National Center for PTSD, United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pilots-database/pilots-db.asp>

The PILOTS (Published International Literature on Traumatic Stress) Database is “an electronic index to the worldwide literature on PTSD and other mental health consequences of exposure to traumatic events. Unlike other databases, the PILOTS Database does not restrict its coverage to articles appearing in selected journals. It attempts to include all publications relevant to PTSD and other forms of traumatic stress, whatever their origin without disciplinary, linguistic, or geographic limitations.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Transit Asset Management: Additional Research on Capital Investment Effects Could Help Transit Agencies Optimize Funding. By David J. Wise. U.S. Government Accountability Office. GAO-13-571. July 11, 2013. 59 p.
<http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/655837.pdf>

“Many of the nearly 700 public transit agencies in the United States struggle to maintain their bus and rail assets in good repair.... This report examines (1) the extent to which selected transit agencies follow leading asset management practices to prioritize capital investments, and challenges in using these practices; (2) the extent to which these agencies measure the effects of capital investments; and (3) FTA initiatives to support transit agencies' use of leading practices.” GAO interviewed officials from nine transit

agencies for this report, including three in California. It also reviewed the practices of nine other agencies, including Bay Area Rapid Transit, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission in the San Francisco area, and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

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