



## Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

Issue 13-134

August 28, 2013

Contents this week:

### **CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY**

Poll reveals attitudes towards surveillance, media reporting

### **ECONOMY**

Effects of slower sales tax growth on the CA economy

### **EDUCATION**

Early childhood education indicators reviewed

### **EMPLOYMENT**

Older adults and workforce participation

### **ENERGY**

Renewable energy projections

### **ENVIRONMENT**

Report looks at wildfire suppression alternative to controlled burning

### **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

How CA state payroll system IT project failed

### **HEALTH**

Risk of unintentional injury death 40% higher in rural counties than urban

### **HUMAN SERVICES**

Measuring the effect of SNAP on food security

### **TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE**

NHTSA: pedestrian traffic injuries increased 14% in 2011

### **VETERANS**

Federal VA oversight of fee-basis care needs improvement

## **CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY**

***Few See Adequate Limits on NSA Surveillance Program.*** PEW Research Center for People & the Press. July 26, 2013. 21 p.

<http://www.people-press.org/2013/07/26/few-see-adequate-limits-on-nsa-surveillance-program/>

“A majority of Americans – 56% – say that federal courts fail to provide adequate limits on the telephone and internet data the government is collecting as part of its anti-terrorism efforts. An even larger percentage (70%) believes that the government uses this data for purposes other than investigating terrorism.... Overall, Democrats approve of the government’s data collection program by a 57%-36% margin, while Republicans (44% approve, 50% disapprove) and Independents (47% approve, 48% disapprove) are more divided.”

## ECONOMY

***Why Have Sales Taxes Grown Slower Than the Economy?* Legislative Analyst's Office. Aug. 5, 2013. 12 p.**

<http://lao.ca.gov/reports/2013/tax/Sales-tax/Sales-tax-080513.pdf>

"The sales and use tax is a major source of revenue of the state and many local governments. Historically, consumers spent about the same portion of their income each year on taxable items, meaning sales tax revenue grew about as quickly as the state's economy. Starting in 1980, however, consumers began to spend a growing share of their income on services, which are not taxed, and a correspondingly declining share on taxed items. This brief details this change in consumer spending patterns, its causes, and what effect it has had on sales tax revenues.... [and] discusses these major findings."

## EDUCATION

***Markers that Matter: Success Indicators in Early Learning and Education.* By Hallie Preskill, et al. Foundation Strategy Group. July 17, 2013. 50 p.**

[http://www.fsg.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/PDF/Success\\_Markers\\_Early\\_Learning.pdf](http://www.fsg.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/PDF/Success_Markers_Early_Learning.pdf)

"There is increasing confusion about how to define and measure positive early childhood outcomes.... This report is the result of a multi-phased process to identify and vet a set of early childhood indicators and emerging themes to support the early learning field.... We began with interviews with 40 early childhood experts and conducted a literature review in early learning and related fields. We then reviewed over 1,100 indicators from 11 existing indicator sets, from which we synthesized and prioritized 48 indicators based on our analysis and expert input. In addition to distilling these indicators, we identified gaps where new themes are emerging and further research is needed to develop additional indicators, particularly in the area of racial and cultural equity."

## EMPLOYMENT

***The Employment Situation, July 2013: Unemployment Drop for Older Workers Does Not Translate into Employment Gain.* By Sara E. Rix. AARP Public Policy Institute. Aug. 27, 2013. 5 p.**

[http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public\\_policy\\_institute/econ\\_sec/2013/the-employment-situation-july-2013-AARP-ppi-econ-sec.pdf](http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public_policy_institute/econ_sec/2013/the-employment-situation-july-2013-AARP-ppi-econ-sec.pdf)

"The overall unemployment rate fell from 7.6% to 7.4% between June and July. The rate also declined for the older workforce – from 5.3% to 5.0%.... The labor force participation rate for older Americans was also somewhat lower (40.3% in July vs. 40.5% in June). Compared to June, an additional 351,000 older adults were out of the labor force. Almost 1.66 million older people were unemployed in July, about 120,000 fewer than in June and more than 300,000 fewer than a year earlier. The number of older workers rose by 95,000, but the older population rose by even more (206,000). Consequently, the proportion with jobs ... did not improve, remaining at 38.3%."

## ENERGY

***Renewable Energy Medium-Term Market Report: Market Trends and Projections to 2018. Executive Summary.*** International Energy Agency. June 25, 2013. 14 p.  
<http://www.iea.org/Textbase/npsum/MTrenew2013SUM.pdf>

This report “assesses market trends for the renewable electricity, biofuels for transport and renewable heat sectors, identifying drivers and challenges to deployment, and making projections through 2018.... On a percentage basis, renewables continue to be the fastest-growing power source. As global renewable electricity generation expands in absolute terms, it is expected to surpass that from natural gas and double that from nuclear power by 2016, becoming the second most important global electricity source, after coal.”

## ENVIRONMENT

***Vegetation Treatment Program Environmental Impact Report.*** California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. Aug. 2013. 1351 p.  
[http://www.bof.fire.ca.gov/board\\_committees/resource\\_protection\\_committee/current\\_projects/vegetation\\_treatment\\_program\\_environmental\\_impact\\_report\\_%28vtpeir%29/](http://www.bof.fire.ca.gov/board_committees/resource_protection_committee/current_projects/vegetation_treatment_program_environmental_impact_report_%28vtpeir%29/)

California predominantly uses controlled fires to reduce fuel load and minimize the risks of catastrophic wildfires. Uncontrolled wildfires present a significant risk to life and property, and can negatively impact the local environment. The California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection is proposing to supplement prescribed burns by increasing the use of mechanical and manual methods, such as the targeted grazing of cattle, horses, sheep, and goats, as well as the application of herbicides, to reduce fuel loads on approximately 38 million acres of land.

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Crash Course: Failure to Heed Early Warnings, Troubles of the Past Contributed to Payroll Collapse.*** By John Adkisson, et al. California Senate Office of Oversight and Outcomes. Aug. 12, 2013. 55 p.  
<http://sooo.senate.ca.gov/sites/sooo.senate.ca.gov/files/crash%20course%2008%2012%2013%20FINAL.pdf>

“While the state has had a number of high-profile IT failures, the 21st Century Project stands out because it has now skidded off the rails twice. Moreover, unlike some other failed projects, such as the digital consolidation of court records, overhauling the state’s human resources and payroll computers is not optional. The existing, Vietnam War-era system is maintained and operated by a dwindling number of retirement-age specialists who still understand the outdated computer language. The original feasibility study warned the existing system needed to be replaced as soon as possible. That was more than 10 years ago.”

## HEALTH

***Safety in Numbers: Are Major Cities the Safest Places in the United States?*** By Sage R. Myers, et al. American College of Emergency Physicians. July 2013. 11 p.  
<http://www.annemergmed.com/webfiles/images/journals/yemem/FA-5548.pdf>

This report examines the relative risk of injury or death in areas of varying density across the United States in all types of geographic areas, from large cities to small towns. “[W]hen urban areas were

considered as a group, risk of serious injury resulting in death was approximately 20% lower than in the most rural areas of the country.... [T]he risk of unintentional injury death is 40% higher in the most rural counties compared with the most urban.” The data support “improving access to trauma center access in rural areas, as well as continued violence prevention efforts in all locales.”

## HUMAN SERVICES

***Measuring the Effect of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Participation on Food Security.*** U.S. Department of Agriculture. Aug. 2013. 356 p.

[http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/redirect\\_pubsdb.asp?strSite=pdfs/Nutrition/SNAP\\_Food\\_Security.pdf](http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/redirect_pubsdb.asp?strSite=pdfs/Nutrition/SNAP_Food_Security.pdf)

This study assesses the effect of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) on food insecurity, a measure of whether a household experiences food access limitations due to lack of money or other resources. “The study found that participating in SNAP for about six months was associated with an improvement in food security.... [However], the study found few associations between SNAP participation and food spending when examining the full sample of households. Participating in SNAP for about six months was not associated with changes in usual weekly food expenditures.”

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***Traffic Safety Facts: 2011 Data.*** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Aug. 1, 2013. 8 p.

<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811748.pdf>

NHTSA has published a new fact sheet on pedestrian traffic injuries. “In 2011, 4,432 pedestrians were killed and an estimated 69,000 were injured in traffic crashes in the United States. On average, a pedestrian was killed every two hours and injured every eight minutes in traffic crashes.” Pedestrians accounted for 14% of total traffic fatalities in 2011, up from 11% in 2010.

## VETERANS

***VA Health Care: Management and Oversight of Fee Basis Care Need Improvement.*** Government Accountability Office. GAO-13-441. May 31, 2013. 49 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/654979.pdf>

The federal Veterans Administration sometimes utilizes non-VA health care providers in fee-for-service arrangements known as fee basis care. This review found that the VA “has not established goals for and does not track how long veterans wait to be seen by fee basis providers.” Additionally, “VA’s monitoring of fee basis care spending is limited because fee basis data do not currently include a claim number or other identifier that allows all charges from a single office visit with a fee basis provider or an inpatient hospital stay to be analyzed together.”

### **About *Studies in the News***

*Studies in the News* (SITN) is a service provided by the California Research Bureau (CRB), a division of the California State Library. CRB provides independent, nonpartisan research and analysis for the Governor, Legislature and State Constitutional Officers.

- SITN lists of current studies related to public policy issues are e-mailed weekly. Archived issues are available at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb>.
- To add or remove your name from the SITN distribution list, or to update your e-mail address, please contact us at [crb@library.ca.gov](mailto:crb@library.ca.gov), or (916) 319-2691.
- SITN is available as an RSS feed at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb/>.