



## Studies in the News

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### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT**

*The Effect of Medical Marijuana Laws on Crime: Evidence from State Panel Data, 1990-2006.*

By Robert G. Morris, et al. PLOS ONE. Mar. 26, 2014. 10 p.

<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0092816>

"Studies have shown that marijuana use was associated with higher prevalence of subsequent illicit drug use and an increased risk of violence. Yet, other studies have found that once additional factors were

controlled for, there was no relationship between marijuana use and later serious drug use.... The central finding gleaned from the present study was that MML [medical marijuana law] is not predictive of higher crime rates and *may* [authors' emphasis] be related to reductions in rates of homicide and assault.”

## CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***After Decades of Decline, a Rise in Stay-at-Home Mothers.* By D’Vera Cohn, et al. Pew Research Center. Apr. 2014. 37 p.**

[http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2014/04/Moms-At-Home\\_04-08-2014.pdf](http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2014/04/Moms-At-Home_04-08-2014.pdf)

“About three-in-ten children (28%) in the U.S. today are being raised by a stay-at-home mother. This totaled 21.1 million in 2012 out of 74.2 million Americans younger than 18, up from 17.3 million (24% of children) in 2000. In 1970, 48% of children (34 million) had a mother who stayed at home.... The recent turnaround appears to be driven by a mix of demographic, economic and societal factors, including rising immigration as well as a downturn in women’s labor force participation, and is set against a backdrop of continued public ambivalence about the impact of working mothers on young children.”

## ECONOMY

***2013 Otis Report on the Creative Economy: California, Los Angeles Region.* Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation. Otis College of Art and Design. Feb. 2014. 156 p.**

[http://www.otis.edu/creative-economy-report/download/2013-Otis\\_Report\\_on\\_the\\_Creative\\_Economy.pdf](http://www.otis.edu/creative-economy-report/download/2013-Otis_Report_on_the_Creative_Economy.pdf)

This latest edition “for the first time addresses how the arts and culture and related industries affect the economy statement. In a nutshell, Internet publishing and digital media boomed in the first five years from 2007 to 2012, and everything else was an also-ran, at best.... California’s 681,400 creative workers, broadly defined, earned an average annual wage of \$90,130 during 2012—37.5% higher than the average statewide wage of \$56,293.... Fresh consideration of what’s happening in California’s K-12 public schools could be in order. The Otis Report notes that only 5.8% of California’s public school students took art classes during the 2011-2012 year.” (*Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 7, 2014).

## EDUCATION

***Falling Out of the Lead: Following High Achievers Through High School and Beyond.* The Education Trust. Apr. 2, 2014. 28 p.**

[www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/publications/files/FallingOutOftheLead.pdf](http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/publications/files/FallingOutOftheLead.pdf)

“Nationally, there are 61,250 students of color and 60,300 students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds who perform among the top 25% of all students in reading and math at the beginning of high school. Many high-achieving students of color and students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, however, leave high school with lower AP exam rates, lower SAT/ACT scores, and lower GPAs than their high-achieving white and more advantaged peers—a reality that influences their choices beyond high school.... Interviews with the principal of one successful school and with high-achieving students from around the country provide insight on what practitioners can do.”

## EMPLOYMENT

**“Employment Impact of Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Taxes.”** By Lisa M. Powell, et al. *American Journal of Public Health* vol. 104 no. 4 (Apr. 2014) pp. 672-677.

<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.2013.301630>

“We provide an independent comprehensive assessment of the employment impact of SSB [sugar-sweetened beverage] taxes.... We found that the imposition of a 20% tax on SSBs would result in a net employment increase of 4406 jobs in Illinois and 6654 jobs in California, which is close to a zero net change (0.06% and 0.03% of jobs in those respective states). A key distinction of this study is that we report the net employment effect rather than the gross employment effect that industry highlights.”

## ENERGY

***Petroleum Refining: Industry’s Outlook Depends on Market Changes and Key Environmental Regulations.*** Government Accountability Office. GAO-14-249. Mar. 2014. 71 p.

<http://gao.gov/assets/670/661710.pdf>

“GAO was asked to provide information on the domestic petroleum refining industry. This report examines: (1) major changes that have recently affected the industry and (2) the future of the industry. GAO reviewed information including studies by agencies and consultants and company financial filings.... GAO recommends that EPA identify the underlying causes of delays in issuing RFS [Renewable Fuel Standard] standards and implement a plan to issue RFS standards on time. EPA generally agreed with GAO’s findings and recommendations.”

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Using Automatic Escalation in Public Sector Retirement Plans to Increase Savings.*** By Paula Sanford. Center for State & Local Government Excellence. Mar. 2014. 18 p.

[http://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Using\\_Auto\\_Escalation\\_14-528.pdf](http://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Using_Auto_Escalation_14-528.pdf)

Automatic escalation is a “plan design feature” in which a person’s contribution to his/her contribution plan is automatically increased at regular intervals until the person reaches a certain level or cap. Automatic escalation is often used in the private sector as a means to increase retirement savings, and could be used in the public sector. Case studies in Missouri, Ohio and Virginia offer suggestions on how to overcome the barriers to implementation: employee perceptions, state tax laws regarding garnishments and withholdings, and the lack of a champion to represent this cause.

## HEALTH

***Health Information Exchange: An Overview.*** By Jaemin Lee, et al. California Research Bureau. Apr. 2014. 2 p.

<http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/14/S-14-010.pdf>

“As the Affordable Care Act expands health care benefits to millions of uninsured and underinsured people, lowering costs of care—while improving health outcomes—has become a pressing issue. One approach to this problem is to reduce duplicative laboratory tests and prevent medication errors by exchanging health information across different care settings, regardless of organizational affiliations or geographic boundaries. This Short Subject defines major terminologies associated with health information technology and discusses federal efforts to encourage the adoption of electronic health record systems.”

## HOUSING

***A House Divided: How Race Colors the Path to Homeownership.* By Skylar Olsen, et al. Zillow, Inc. Jan. 2014. 40 p.**

<http://www.zillow.com/research/minority-mortgage-access-6127/>

Using the 2011 five-year American Community Survey at the zip code level, the authors explore home ownership by race and ethnicity through the recent housing boom and bust. Among the findings: “Fewer minorities apply for conventional mortgages. Although Hispanics and blacks make up 17% and 12% of the U.S. population, respectively, they represented only 5% and 3% of the conventional mortgage application pool.... The rise and subsequent fall of home values in the U.S. housing bubble disproportionately affected black and Hispanic homeowners, measured by indexed home values between the peak of the market and the bottom, or ‘trough.’”

## HUMAN SERVICES

***Child Welfare Services: The County Child Welfare Services Agencies We Reviewed Must Provide Better Protection for Abused and Neglected Children.* California State Auditor. Apr. 2014. 108 p.**

<http://www.auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2013-110.pdf>

“[T]he California State Auditor presents this audit report concerning the policies and procedures the child welfare services (CWS) agencies of Butte, Orange, and San Francisco counties follow when considering whether to remove children from their homes. This report concludes that these agencies must provide better protection for abused and neglected children. Specifically, although all three agencies require the use of standardized safety and risk assessments, the agencies’ social workers frequently did not prepare these assessments in a timely manner or at all, and the information used in these assessments was often inaccurate. This led to flawed evaluations of safety, risk, and needed services and, at times, led to poor decisions related to child safety.”

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***Repair Priorities 2014: Transportation Spending Strategies to Save Taxpayer Dollars and Improve Roads.* By Rayla Bellis, et al. Smart Growth America. Mar. 2014. 46 p.**

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/repair-priorities-2014.pdf>

“Between 2009 and 2011, the latest year with available data, states collectively spent \$20.4 billion annually to build new roadways and add lanes to existing roads. America’s state-owned road network grew by 8,822 lane-miles of road during that time, accounting for less than 1% of the total in 2011. During that same time, states spent just \$16.5 billion annually repairing and preserving the other 99% of the system, even while roads across the country were deteriorating. On a scale of good, fair or poor, 21% of America’s roads were in poor condition in 2011. Just 37% of roads were in good condition that year—down from 41% in 2008.”

## VETERANS

***Fighting for Peace: Veterans and Military Families in the Anti-Iraq War Movement.* By Lisa Leitz. University of Minnesota Press. Apr. 2014. 306 p.  
(Available at the California State Library)**

“Throughout this book I reference the cultural context in which military peace movement activism was embedded. American cultural norms and history influenced movement processes, constraints, and

possibilities. Additionally, the shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices of the military, as an institution, and that of the peace movement, as a network, affected the mobilization, framing strategies, tactics, and identities of this section of the peace movement. The novelty and significance of the military peace movement cannot be understood without recognition of the cultural realities that shape individual and collective identities and emotions.”

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