



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Scrap Metal Theft: Is Legislation Working for States? By Jennifer Burnett, et al. Council of State Governments. May 2014. 8 p.

http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/system/files/MetalTheft_Final%20%2805282014%29.pdf

“Insurance companies, law enforcement officials, and industry watchdogs have called scrap metal theft—including copper, aluminum, nickel, stainless steel, and scrap iron—one of the fastest-growing crimes in the United States. State leaders have taken notice, passing a flurry of legislation meant to curb metal theft and help law enforcement find and prosecute criminals. Researchers at the Council of State Governments ... set out to determine if all that legislation is having an impact on metal theft rates....

After an evaluation of the existing research and interviews with state and local officials and law enforcement personnel across all 50 states, CSG researchers concluded that metal theft data for states are not available for analysis. Because metal theft is such a significant and widespread problem ... it is imperative that states evaluate ways to begin collecting these data.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***Aging and the LGBT Community.* By Kellie Jean Hogue. California Research Bureau. June. 2014. 2 p.**
<http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/14/S-14-013.pdf>

This Short Subject is a part of our Healthy Aging Series. It offers a brief summary of this diverse group's demographic characteristics and looks at aging in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community through three lenses: identity and relationships; social networks; and cultural competence.

ECONOMY

***International Trade Outlook: The Southern California Region, 2014-2015.* Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, Kyser Center for Economic Research. June 3, 2014. 115 p.**
<http://cdn.laedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/LAEDC-IntlTrade-2014.pdf>

The report anticipates that trade will continue to improve through 2015 for both the nation and Southern California, building upon gains from last year. With Los Angeles County and the rest of Southern California serving as the largest transportation node in the United States, both imports and exports are projected to improve this year. The report provides an overview of the United States, Southern California and Los Angeles County outlooks and includes special reports on NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement], Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) and shifting trade patterns.

EDUCATION

***Online Learning and Student Outcomes in California's Community Colleges.* By Hans Johnson, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. May 2014. 20 p.**
<http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=1096>

“By 2012, online course enrollment in the state's community colleges totaled almost one million, representing about 11% of total enrollment. Indeed, practically all of the enrollment increases over the past ten years have occurred in online courses. Among students taking credit courses in 2011-12, one of every five took at least one online course.... In the short term, course by course, student outcomes are worse in online courses than in traditional courses. Students are less likely to complete an online course than a traditional course, and they are less likely to complete an online course with a passing grade.... [However,] students who take at least some online courses are more likely than those who take only traditional courses to earn an associate's degree or to transfer to a four-year institution.”

EMPLOYMENT

Earnings and Employment Data for Workers Covered Under Social Security and Medicare, by State and County, 2011. Social Security Administration. May 2014. 461 p.

http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/eedata_sc/2011/eedata_sc11.pdf

“In 2011, 158.6 million workers had earnings taxable under the Social Security program.” Roughly 17 million of those workers are in California, 9 million men and 8 million women. “This report presents 2011 earnings and employment data by state and county for persons covered under the Social Security and Medicare programs. The data show, by sex and age, the number of wage and salary workers and self-employed persons, the amount of their taxable earnings, and the amount they paid in Social Security and Medicare contributions.”

ENERGY

Tier 3 Motor Vehicle Emission and Fuel Standards. By Richard K. Lattanzio, et al. Congressional Research Service. Apr. 28, 2014. 14 p.

<http://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/R43497.pdf>

This report summarizes the recently adopted Tier 3 vehicle emission and fuel standards. “By the time Tier 3 is fully implemented in Model Year 2025, the standards for light duty vehicles will require reductions of about 80% in tailpipe emissions of non-methane organic gases and nitrogen oxides (both of which contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone) and of about 70% in tailpipe emissions of particulates. Ozone and particulates are the most widespread air pollutants in the United States.... The fuel standards will match limits already attained in California and in much of the world, including the European Union, Japan, and Korea, and proposed for adoption in China.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Election Legislation 2014: Threats and Opportunities. By Erin Ferns Lee. Project Vote. May 2014. 38 p.

<http://projectvote.org/images/publications/Threats-and-Opportunities/Election-Legislation-2014-Threats-and-Opportunities-May%202014.pdf>

This report offers a summary of the “threats and opportunities” presented in proposed 2014 state and federal legislation concerning elections. Researchers have summarized proposals on several topics: restricting access to voter registration, reducing long lines on Election Day, and restoring voting rights of convicted felons, among others. The report cites six California bills considered positive and two considered negative to voters, particularly in the area of expanding early voting, preregistration, and campus voting.

HEALTH

A Little Investment Goes a Long Way: Modest Cost to Expand Preventive and Routine Health Services to All Low-Income Californians. By Laurel Lucia, et al. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. May 2014. 16 p.

http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/healthcare/health_undocumented.shtml

“[T]he California legislature is considering a proposal (Senate Bill 1005, the Health for All Act) that would expand Medi-Cal coverage to include primary and preventive care, prescription drugs, mental health care, dental care, and other routine health services for all low-income California residents regardless of

immigration status.... This report finds that the proposed Medi-Cal expansion would involve new state spending, but the cost is modest in comparison to the impact on health and coverage, and the policy also produces savings.”

HUMAN SERVICES

Growing Number of Dads Home with the Kids: Biggest Increase among Those Caring for Family. By Gretchen Livingston, et al. Pew Research Center. June 5, 2014. 16 p.

http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2014/06/2014-06-05_Stay-at-Home-Dads.pdf

“The number of fathers who are at home with their children for any reason has nearly doubled since 1989, when 1.1 million were in this category. It reached its highest point—2.2 million—in 2010, just after the official end of the recession, which spanned from 2007 to 2009. Since that time, the number has fallen slightly, driven mainly by declines in unemployment ... the largest share of stay-at-home fathers (35%) is at home due to illness or disability.... And almost half (47%) of stay-at-home fathers are living in poverty, compared with 8% of working fathers.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Beyond Shovel Ready: The Extent and Impact of U.S. Infrastructure Jobs. By Joseph Kane, et al. Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings Institution. May 2014. 32 p.

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2014/05/09%20infrastructure%20jobs/beyond%20shovel%20ready.pdf>

“This report aims to define a more precise range of jobs in occupations and industries that play a distinct role in the design, construction, operation, and governance of the nation’s infrastructure assets. It explores where this employment is concentrated nationally and provides insight into the wages, projections, and skills required for these jobs.... The report finds that infrastructure employment spans across a variety of public and private sectors—from pipelines and railroads to warehouses and utilities—containing an array of jobs that pay competitive wages, have low barriers of entry, and are expected to grow in years to come.... Not surprisingly, the largest labor markets have the most infrastructure employment overall. For example, New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago are the nation’s three largest labor markets and alone contain more than 1.8 million infrastructure workers.”

VETERANS

Access Audit System-wide Review of Access. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. June 9, 2014. 54 p.

<http://www.va.gov/health/docs/VAAccessAuditFindingsReport.pdf>

This report details the results of an audit of scheduling and access management practices, conducted May 12, 2014 through June 3, 2014. “Overall, 13% of scheduling staff interviewed indicated they received instruction (from supervisors or others) to enter in the ‘desired date’ field a date different from the date the Veteran had requested. At least one instance of such practices was identified in 76% of VA facilities.” The audit notes that the VA has already taken certain steps to improve service, such as retrain telephone representatives, enhance the monitoring of patient satisfaction, and remove incentive programs that serve to encourage inaccurate results.

About *Studies in the News*

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