



Studies in the News

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Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Outsourcing prison services & operations to maximize efficiency

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Big cities grew faster than suburbs, 2011 to 2014

ECONOMY

Historical & mutually beneficial ties between China & Los Angeles County

EDUCATION

State approaches to civic education

EMPLOYMENT

Analysis compares effects of two CA minimum wage bills

ENERGY

Study recommends changes to improve CA's Demand Response programs

ENVIRONMENT

Field survey of past tsunami deposits using new CA data

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

U.S. Supreme Court strikes down MA abortion clinic buffer zone

HEALTH

The adverse effects of recreational marijuana: a review of medical literature

HUMAN SERVICES

Immigrant parents' barriers to early educational experiences

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

***Prison Break: A New Approach to Public Cost and Safety.* By Simon Hakim, et al. The Independent Institute. June 2014. 76 p.**

http://www.independent.org/publications/policy_reports/detail.asp?id=43

“Considerable debate continues among state officials, criminal justice experts, and the media about whether contract prisons provide sufficient savings and perform adequately to justify their use. This [report] is designed to examine the evidence using publicly available state corrections cost data as the primary source.” California was one of 10 states analyzed regarding their use of private prisons. Based on analysis of the data and interviews with state officials and stakeholders, the authors concluded that private prisons could lower prison costs through competition for services between the public and private sector, and other managed competition in bidding for contracted prison services and in the operation of existing prisons to achieve more efficient delivery of prison services.

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

South, West Have Fastest Growing Cities, Census Bureau Reports; Three of Top 10 Are in Texas Capital Area. United States Census Bureau. May 22, 2014. 2 p.

<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb14-89.html>

“For the first third of this decade, big city population growth continues to outpace the rates of 2000 through 2010, according to new data released by the Census Bureau.... [T]he numbers show that many cities have gained more people in the three-plus years since the 2010 Census than they gained for the entire previous decade. This includes three of the five largest cities, New York, Philadelphia and Chicago (which lost population in the previous decade). Among the 25 largest cities, nine are already ahead of their previous decade’s gains, including Dallas, Denver, Memphis, San Francisco, San Jose and Washington, D.C.... In the city versus suburb realm, the new numbers once again affirm a reversal that counters decades of suburban-dominated regional growth among metro areas with more than 1 million people. Now, for three years running, primary cities are growing faster than their suburbs.” (William H. Frey, *Brookings*).

ECONOMY

Growing Together: China and Los Angeles County. By Ferdinando Guerra. Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, Kyser Center for Economic Research. June 2014. 134 p.

<http://laedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/2014-Growing-Together-China-and-LA-County.pdf>

This report reviews the historical and mutually beneficial relationship between China and Los Angeles County, updating information and insights from the first edition published five years ago. It describes the bonds between the two regions and how these bonds have impacted the development of both. Investment into Los Angeles County from China has doubled over the past five years, with China becoming LA County’s top investors. With 570,000 Chinese tourists in 2013, China is the top overseas market for Los Angeles tourism; and Los Angeles is the nation’s top international trade gateway to China and China’s top gateway to the U.S., handling nearly 45% of trade between the two countries.

EDUCATION

Different Paths to a Common Goal: Preparing Students for Civic Life. By Brady Delander, et al. Education Commission of the States. June 2014. 4 p.

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/13/08/11308.pdf>

“While many Americans might agree on the importance of preparing young people for citizenship in a democracy, civic education has been in decline. Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress show students across all grade levels have a less-than-adequate grasp of the skills and knowledge necessary to engage as citizens. In response, a number of states have taken a variety of approaches to promote and advance civics education.... This report, the sixth and final in the series, explores the similarities of these efforts around the country.”

EMPLOYMENT

Ten Dollars or Thirteen Dollars? Comparing the Effects of State Minimum Wage Increases in California. By Sylvia A. Allegretto, et al. Institute on Labor and Employment, UC Berkeley, Center in Wage and Employment Dynamics. June 2014. 28 p.

<http://irle.berkeley.edu/cwed/briefs/2014-02.pdf>

“In this report we compare the effects of \$10 (AB10) and \$13 (SB935) minimum wage levels in California. We show that AB10 restores some of the ground lost by low-paid workers in recent years, but it maintains the inflation-adjusted minimum wage at about the same level as in 1988. The Leno bill, SB935, goes much further, raising the real minimum wage to just above the peak value obtained in 1968. Between 2014 and 2017, the aggregate increase in earnings accrued by affected workers will total about \$8.2 billion for the \$10 minimum wage bill and \$22.5 billion for the \$13 minimum wage proposal.... We find that California’s businesses are likely to absorb the increased labor costs of either minimum wage largely with offsets from increased worker productivity, from declines in recruitment and retention costs, and with small price increases in the restaurant industry (the industry most affected by minimum wage increases).”

ENERGY

Delivering on the Promise Of California’s Demand Response Programs: An Opportunity for the State to Maximize the Flexibility and Efficiency of Its Electrical Grid. By Michael W. Jarred. California Senate Office of Research. June 2014. 16 p.

http://www.sor.govoffice3.com/vertical/Sites/%7B3BDD1595-792B-4D20-8D44-626EF05648C7%7D/uploads/SOR_Policy_Matters--Demand_Response.pdf

“The state’s energy regulators are creating demand response programs that can act as supply-side resources to reduce or increase energy demand at a particular time and location and by a specific amount. The more control utilities and the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) have over energy demand, the more likely they will meet California’s overall energy needs with fewer power plants and less costly electricity.”

ENVIRONMENT

The Search for Geologic Evidence of Distant-Source Tsunamis Using New Field Data in California. By Rick Wilson, et al. United States Geological Survey. May 20, 2014. 132 p.

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2013/1170/c/index.html>

Understanding the impacts of historical tsunami events in California is a key step in evaluating the risks presented by future tsunami events. “Recent numerical tsunami modeling results identify the eastern Aleutian Islands subduction zone as the ‘worstcase’ distant-source region, with the potential for causing tsunami runups of 7–10 m in northern and central California and 3–4 m in southern California.... A reconnaissance of 20 coastal marshlands was performed through site visits and coring of shallow surface sediments to determine if evidence for past tsunamis existed.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

McCullen, et al., v. Coakley, Attorney General of Massachusetts, et al. U.S. Supreme Court. No. 12-1168. June 26, 2014. 52 p.

http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/13pdf/12-1168_6k47.pdf

In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court justices declared that a 35-foot buffer zone on the sidewalks near abortion facilities in Massachusetts was a violation of free speech. In his opinion, Chief Justice Roberts stated that Massachusetts took "the extreme step of closing a substantial portion of a traditional public forum to all speakers. It has done so without seriously addressing the problem through alternatives that leave the forum open for its time-honored purposes."

HEALTH

"Adverse Effects of Marijuana Use." By Nora D. Volkow, et al. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 370, no. 23 (June 5, 2014) pp. 2219-2227. (Available at the California State Library)

"The popular notion seems to be that marijuana is a harmless pleasure, access to which should not be regulated or considered illegal. Currently, marijuana is the most commonly used 'illicit' drug in the United States, with about 12% of people 12 years of age or older reporting use in the past year and particularly high rates of use among young people.... Although multiple studies have reported detrimental effects, others have not, and the question of whether marijuana is harmful remains the subject of heated debate. Here we review the current state of the science related to the adverse health effects of the recreational use of marijuana, focusing on those areas for which the evidence is strongest."

HUMAN SERVICES

Immigrant Parents and Early Childhood Programs: Addressing Barriers of Literacy, Culture, and Systems Knowledge. By Maki Park, et al. Migration Policy Institute. June 2014. 62 p.

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrant-parents-early-childhood-programs-barriers>

"Immigrant parents face significant barriers as they try to engage with their children's early educational experiences, including greatly restricted access for many due to limited English proficiency and functional literacy.... [P]arents who are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) number 2.39 million (11% of all parents of young children nationwide [21% in CA]); foreign-born individuals account for 90% of all LEP parents [93% in CA]. In addition to barriers to parent engagement, parents' LEP status is also associated with children being less likely to have health insurance and receive needed medical care."

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