



Studies in the News

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CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***The Best States to Be Female.* By Steven P. Lanza. *The Connecticut Economy*. Summer 2014. 3 p.**
http://cteconomy.uconn.edu/articles/2014N3_Summer/SL_Su2014.pdf

In 2010, *The Economist* introduced a women's economic opportunity index (WEO) "to gauge the differential economic prospects for women across the globe." Using the WEO as a guide to study differences between states in the gender pay gap, findings suggest that "[e]conomic prospects for women are brightest in the Northeast and along the West Coast, and dimmest in the South-Central region of the country in states that straddle the Mississippi River." California ranks sixth.

ECONOMY

Transforming Performance Measurement for the 21st Century. By Harry P. Hatry. The Urban Institute. July 2014. 91 p.

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/413197-Transforming-Performance-Measurement-for-the-21st-Centurys.pdf>

This report provides recommendations for making use of tools such as data analytics, data visualization, and big data to “help speed up the development and use of modern technology. Technology-related problems exist, especially the need to provide user-friendly devices ... to download at any time and in any location ... information that enables them drill down into the latest available data. This is data that in the past would have required an excessive amount of time and resources to obtain. And, all of this achieved without requiring more than a basic knowledge of analytical methods. We hope this report will encourage implementation and use of these great opportunities for performance measurement and performance management in the 21st century.”

Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2013. Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. July 2014. 100 p.

<http://www.federalreserve.gov/econresdata/2013-report-economic-well-being-us-households-201407.pdf>

“To better understand the financial state of U.S. households, the Federal Reserve Board conducted a new consumer survey, the results of which are described in this report.... The survey covered a range of topics—including household financial well-being, housing, credit availability, borrowing for education, savings, retirement, and medical expenses—meant to round out the understanding of how households are faring financially. Overall, the survey found that many households were faring well, but that sizable fractions of the population were at the same time displaying signs of financial stress.”

EDUCATION

From Adoption to Practice: Findings from a National Survey of Teachers. Education Week Research Center. Aug. 2014. 37 p.

http://www.edweek.org/media/ewrc_teacherscommoncore_2014.pdf

“To learn more about educators’ views of the common core standards and their readiness to put them into practice, the Education Week Research Center ... conducted a national survey of registered users of edweek.org.... This report presents findings from the new survey and offers critical insights into: educators’ awareness of the standards and the assessments tied to them; the curricular resources and training they have received to support classroom practice; the impact of the new benchmarks on instruction and student learning; and a range of other topics.... Although a large majority of educators have received some professional development for the common core, nearly eight in 10 report wanting more.”

EMPLOYMENT

The Prevalence of Apprenticeships in Germany and the United States. By Nika Lazaryan, et al. Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. Aug. 2014. 6 p.

http://www.richmondfed.org/publications/research/economic_brief/2014/pdf/eb_14-08.pdf

“The educational systems and labor markets of Germany and the United States take different approaches to preparing young people for the workforce. One feature of Germany’s workforce development model that has been of interest to policymakers in the United States is the important role played by employer-financed apprenticeships. The United States instead relies mainly on comprehensive general education, with career training largely taking place in community colleges and other postsecondary institutions.

Research has pointed to several factors that may foster apprenticeships in Germany to a greater extent than in the United States, including labor-market conditions, social norms, and other circumstances.”

ENERGY

***Cracking the TEAPOT: Technical, Economic, and Achievable Potential Studies.* By Max Neubauer. American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. Aug. 14, 2014. 89 p.**

<http://www.aceee.org/research-report/u1407>

(Free registration required)

“In this report we focus on the development and role of energy efficiency potential studies. The primary objective of our report is to better understand the nuts and bolts of these studies and how their various methodological approaches and assumptions influence energy efficiency potential estimates.... The value of potential studies depends on the effort and resources that go into them, and the assumptions—whether reasonable or constrained—that underlie them. Many of these assumptions are often undisclosed or discussed, often for proprietary reasons. Lack of transparency about assumptions is a major issue for potential studies. These issues must be addressed so that potential studies are accessible to all stakeholders in order to facilitate more active, constructive discussions and more reflective assessments.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***The 2014 Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds (DI).* Board of Trustees, Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds. July 28, 2014. 259 p.**

<http://www.ssa.gov/oact/tr/2014/tr2014.pdf>

“The projected theoretical combined OASI and DI Trust Fund asset reserves increase through 2019, begin to decline in 2020, and become depleted and unable to pay scheduled benefits in full on a timely basis in 2033.” To keep both funds solvent, the report recommends that Congress act quickly to carry out the following steps: 1) increase revenues by an amount “equivalent to an immediate and permanent payroll tax rate increase of 2.83 percentage points” 2) reduce scheduled benefits by an amount “equivalent to an immediate and permanent reduction of 17.4% applied to all current and future beneficiaries,” (or a 20.8% reduction if they were applied only to those who become initially eligible for benefits in 2014 or later), or 3) implement some combination of these approaches.

HEALTH

***State Laws and Legislation Related to Biologic Medications and Substitution of Biosimilars.* National Council of State Legislatures. July 2014. 7 p.**

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/state-laws-and-legislation-related-to-biologic-medications-and-substitution-of-biosimilars.aspx>

This summary discusses state regulation of generic versions of biologic medicines. Biologic medicines, such as stem cell therapy and human growth hormone, are relatively new to the market and are currently patented. When those patents run out, generic forms, called “biosimilar” medicines, will become available. Many states are working to regulate biosimilar medicines in a similar manner to regulating generic drugs. “In the past one and a half years at least 23 states have considered legislation establishing state standards for substitution of a ‘biosimilar’ prescription product to replace an original biologic product.” In 2013, California passed a bill through both chambers (SB 598), but it was vetoed by the governor.

HUMAN SERVICES

2014 Kids Count Data Book. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2014. 60 p.

http://www.childrennow.org/uploads/documents/casey_data_book_2014.pdf

“Comparing data from before and after the recession reveals positive and negative developments in child well-being nationally.... [C]hildren experienced gains in the Education and Health domains, but setbacks in the Economic Well-Being and Family and Community domains.” California’s ranking in overall child well-being has gone up from 41st to 40th. While other indicators—Economic Well-Being, Education, and Family and Community—remain the same or have gone down, California’s Health ranking has risen to 26th. However, California still ranks near the bottom in children’s well-being.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Living Wage Calculator. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

<http://livingwage.mit.edu/>

This calculator allows users to select state, county, and local level comparisons of living wages, minimum wages, and poverty wages. For instance, a living wage for one adult and one child household in Butte County is \$19.36 per hour; the minimum and poverty wages in Butte County are \$8.00 and \$7.00 per hour, respectively.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

How the Private Sector Can Improve Public Transportation Infrastructure. By Clifford Winston. Brookings Institution. July 2014. 25 p.

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2014/07/improve-transportation-infrastructure-private-sector-winston>

“The public sector has generally provided the vast amount of a nation’s infrastructure – roadways, waterways, railways and airways—and expanded it to satisfy users’ growing demand for transportation. But as demand has increased and ageing infrastructure facilities have required ever-greater funds for maintenance and new construction, capacity has become increasingly strained and travellers and shippers have experienced more congestion and delays.... [T]echnological advances in the transportation modes could facilitate significant improvements in infrastructure performance provided its implementation is not impeded by the government.”

About *Studies in the News*

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