



Studies in the News

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Pursuant to AB 2494 (Cooley, Chapter 425, Statutes of 2014), the California Research Bureau is now accepting copies of court filings regarding frivolous court actions or tactics. For more information, please see <http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/ab2494.html>.

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Restructuring the Court-Ordered Debt Collection Process. Legislative Analyst's Office.

Nov. 10, 2014. 28 p.

<http://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Detail/3151>

"Court-ordered debt collected from defendants convicted of traffic violations or criminal offenses provides revenue to a number of state and local funds, which in turn support a variety of programs including trial court operations and victim assistance.... [W]e believe that improvements can be made to help increase

collections of such debt and the amount of revenue available for distribution to various state and local funds. Specifically, we recommend: (1) realigning the current court-ordered debt collection process to the courts, (2) piloting a new collections incentive model that would reward courts for improving collections, and (3) improving data collection to enable comprehensive evaluations of the performance of collection programs.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***A Class Act? Stability and Instability in Children’s Lives.* By June Carbone, et al. Council on Contemporary Families. Oct. 8, 2014.**

<https://contemporaryfamilies.org/stability-instability-brief-report/>

“[G]rowing instability in American families, reflected not just in divorce rates but falling rates of marriage and high rates of unwed motherhood, is not caused by people abandoning traditional concerns for children’s well-being. It is a class issue caused by the growing gap between the job options, resources, economic stability, and personal safety nets available to college-educated Americans and less-educated workers.... [L]ess-educated families of middle and low income America have fallen behind, not only in income but in the time and attention they are able to devote to their children—and this in an era when children’s success requires ever more investment of time and money than in the past, over a longer period of time.”

ECONOMY

***A Portrait of California 2014-2015: California Human Development Report.* By Kristen Lewis, et al. Measure of America: A Project of the Social Science Research Council. Dec. 9, 2014. 172 p.**

<http://www.measureofamerica.org/california2014-15/>

“If California were a country, it would rank 34th in the world by population and 8th by size of its economy – big enough for a seat at the G8.... Instead of relying only on economic analysis ... [this report] uses the human development approach to tell us how people are doing.... Inequalities in health, education, and earnings divide California communities in ways that challenge conventional north-south and inland-coastal divisions in the state.... [W]e have identified ‘Five Californias,’ each with its own distinct well-being profile.” Included as separate downloads are: the full report; key findings in English and Spanish; top ten metro area fact sheets, data tables; methodical note; and an interactive mapping function.

EDUCATION

***College Counseling in High Schools: Advising State Policy.* Education Commission of the States. Dec. 2014. 8 p.**

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/16/69/11669.pdf>

This issue of The Progress of Education Reform explores college counseling in high schools with the following key takeaways. “High schools sending more students to four-year postsecondary institutions have distinctly different practices and counselor attitudes than high schools sending fewer students to four-year institutions. Research supports high-impact, low-cost approaches such as college coaching and texting initiatives that can especially help low-income and first-generation college-goers. Emerging state policies and initiatives are aligned with these approaches.”

EMPLOYMENT

***When Women Thrive, Businesses Thrive.* By Patricia Milligan, et al. Mercer. Nov. 12, 2014. 76 p.**
<http://www.mercer.com/content/dam/mercer/attachments/global/Talent/gender-diversity/Gender-Diversity-When-women-thrive-businesses-thrive-Mercer.pdf>

“Based on 178 submissions from 164 companies in 28 countries covering 1.7 million employees—including more than 680,000 women—we find that ... [c]urrent female hiring, promotion, and retention rates are insufficient to create gender equality over the next decade.... Standalone programs and siloed initiatives are not advancing gender diversity. Statistical analysis of the data provided by respondents reveals the following key drivers: A broad, enterprise-wide focus is linked to sustainable change.... Accountability is not enough — leadership needs to be engaged in promoting and managing diversity.... The active management of talent drives more favorable outcomes than traditional programs.... Nontraditional solutions impact firms’ long-term ability to engage and retain female talent.”

ENERGY

***A Review of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration’s Draft Regulatory Impact Analysis.* By Kevin Neels, et al. The Brattle Group. Nov. 14, 2014. 73 p.**
http://rsiweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/The-Brattle-Group-Report-for-the-RSI-CTC_A-Review-of-PHMSAs-Draft-RIA-for-HM-251_11-14-14.pdf

“One-third of the crude oil hauled from North Dakota's Bakken Shale region by railcars could be forced off the tracks and into expensive truck fleets in the next four years.... The Railway Supply Institute says there aren't enough shops to retrofit cars carrying flammable liquids in time to meet the proposed deadline, and that tens of thousands of cars will be pulled out of service as a result. The U.S. Department of Transportation wants tank cars carrying crude oil to be retrofitted with more puncture-resistant features in two years, and those carrying ethanol to be upgraded in three years.... Without enough tank cars, producers of oil, ethanol and other flammables could be forced to curtail production or switch to other, more expensive types of transportation, mainly trucks.” (*Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 21, 2014).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Fiscal Survey of the States: An Update of State Fiscal Conditions.* By Michael Streepey, et al. National Association of State Budget Officers. Dec. 2014. 92 p.**
<http://www.nasbo.org/sites/default/files/NASBO%20Fall%202014%20Fiscal%20Survey%20of%20States.pdf>

State fiscal conditions are improving overall, with many states able to revive spending on K-12 education and higher education—or to cut taxes and fees—actions that they were unable to take in recent recessionary years. However, this spending is moderate, due to the gradual improvement in the economy. General fund spending is expected to increase by 3.1% in fiscal 2015, but this is below the historical average growth rate of 5.5% of the last 34 years. States may continue to encounter revenue challenges, particularly from economic activity outside state revenue systems such as online retail sales.

HEALTH

Outpatient Prescription Drug Coverage 101. California Health Benefits Review Program. Dec. 18, 2014. 3 p.

http://cms3.revize.com/revize/chbrp/other_publications/docs/Final_Rx_2_Pager_formatted_121814.pdf

“This resource has been prepared ... as a tool for policymakers to help clarify and explain the common terms associated with prescription drug coverage and the general benefit design for coverage, both of which are often addressed in health policy legislation.” The brief includes a short glossary and a discussion of the four-tier system of outpatient prescription drug coverage.

HUMAN SERVICES

Reforms to Help Meet the Growing Demand for Long-Term Care Services. By Daniel Bahr, et al. Center for American Progress. Oct. 31, 2014. 12 p.

<http://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/LongTermCare.pdf>

“About 12 million elderly or disabled Americans rely on long-term care to help them with tasks ranging from eating and bathing to housekeeping and cooking.... [T]he doubling of the elderly population over the coming decades means a substantial increase in the number of people who will need long-term care.” By reviewing Germany’s long-term care system, this brief advocates that policymakers “enhance the value of long-term care insurance by offering refundable tax credits to help pay for coverage” and “expand existing service-corps programs to offer more support for individuals living in the community.”

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

California Economy and Taxes. Legislative Analyst’s Office. Dec. 2014.

<http://www.lao.ca.gov/LAOEconTax>

“The Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) has launched a new online resource on California’s economy and the taxes it generates. Intended to supplement the LAO’s regular reports and legislative testimony, the new LAO California Economy and Taxes blog will include regular, brief updates specifically focused on California economic and tax trends, monthly state tax collections, state jobs reports, and other data and research related to California’s economy and tax revenues.” (*Senate Daybook*, Dec. 9, 2014).

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

The Importance of the Internet and Transatlantic Data Flows for U.S. and EU Trade and Investment. By Joshua P. Meltzer. The Brookings Institution. Oct. 2014. 26 p.

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Papers/2014/10/internet%20transatlantic%20data%20flows%20meltzer/internet%20transatlantic%20data%20flows%20version%202.pdf>

“This paper focuses on the importance of the Internet and Transatlantic data flows for U.S. and EU trade and investment. Whether the U.S. and the EU are able to take full advantage of the opportunities for international trade and investment presented by their increasingly online and digital populations will affect transatlantic economic relations. As the world’s two largest economies, the U.S. and EU decisions on support for cross-border data flows will also have global implications... The first part of this paper provides an overview of the U.S.-EU economic relationship and how growth in Internet access and data flows are driving an increasing amount of transatlantic trade and investment. The second part calculates the economic value of the free flow of data for U.S. and EU services trade and investment.”

About *Studies in the News*

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