



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

California's Future: Corrections. By Magnus Lofstrom, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. Feb. 2015. 9 p.

http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_215MLR.pdf

Part of the "California's Future" series, this report on the future of corrections includes information regarding the following topics: challenges still facing California's prison and jail systems; the decrease in

state prison and parole populations; shortage of county jail beds and space for services and programming; and crime rates at or close to historical lows (especially violent crime rate, which is at its lowest level since 1967). Although realignment has “provided an opportunity to implement new strategies to reduce both reoffending and reliance on incarceration in California,” prison populations still need to be further reduced from their current level above the 137.5% threshold established by the federal court, recidivism rates remain high, and funding requires an outcomes evaluation component.

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

A Community of Contrasts: Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in California, 2014. Asian Americans Advancing Justice. Jan. 2015. 64 p.

http://www.advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/A_Community_Of_Contrasts_NHPI_CA_2014.pdf

Using census data, this report provides information about Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) in California, as well as in Sacramento, the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and San Diego. The report states that NHPI is one of the fastest-growing and diverse populations in California. “[NHPI] youth face significant challenges, similar to other communities of color that are underrepresented in higher education.” Generally, NHPI are “one of the highest mortality rates statewide.... [They] face diverse and distinct immigration challenges [and] a disproportionate number ... are being incarcerated statewide.”

ECONOMY

Economic Census, California. U.S. Census Bureau. Jan. 2015.

http://www.census.gov/econ/census/schedule/state_release.html

“The Economic Census is the U.S. Government's official five-year measure of American business and the economy. It is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, and response is required by law. In October through December 2012, forms were sent out to nearly 4 million businesses, including large, medium and small companies representing all U.S. locations and industries. Respondents were asked to provide a range of operational and performance data for their companies. Some industries are not covered by the economic census.”

EDUCATION

Gender Differences in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Interest, Credits Earned, and NAEP Performance in the 12th Grade. By Brittany C. Cunningham, et al. National Center for Education Statistics. Feb. 2015. 28 p.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015075.pdf>

Drawing from the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Transcript Study and Mathematics and Science Student Questionnaires, this report summarizes the interest level in STEM courses, credits earned in science and math courses, and NAEP science and math performance across gender lines. Researchers found that while lower percentages of females reported that they like mathematics or science and a higher percentage of males had high NAEP averages in math and science, a higher percentage of females had taken STEM-related courses (algebra II, precalculus, biology, etc.). The report also contains breakouts on these questions by race and ethnicity.

ENERGY

Expanding the Energy Efficiency Pie: Serving More Customers, Saving More Energy Through High Program Participation. By Dan York, et al. American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy.

Jan. 14, 2015. 104 p.

<http://www.aceee.org/research-report/u1501>

(Free registration required)

“This report analyzes ten categories of utility-sector energy efficiency programs that have achieved high participation among targeted customer markets. Despite issues with the nature and availability of participation data, the study draws on published data sources and interviews with program contacts and industry experts to identify many examples of programs that have achieved high participation.... The report examines and analyses key factors that contribute to high participation within each of the ten selected program categories. The research reveals that an ever-growing number of utility customers are already participating in energy efficiency programs, and many more could participate.”

ENVIRONMENT

“Survey of Glyphosate Residues in Honey, Corn and Soy Products.” By Fernando Rubio, et al. *Journal of Environmental & Analytical Toxicology*, vol. 5 no. 249 (Nov. 19, 2014) 8 p.

<http://omiconline.org/open-access/survey-of-glyphosate-residues-in-honey-corn-and-soy-products-2161-0525.1000249.php?aid=36354>

A common mechanism for pesticide exposure in humans is through food consumption. Glyphosphate, commonly known by its trade name “RoundUp,” is a popular pesticide that has attracted significant controversy in recent years due to its association with genetically engineered food crops. This study attempts to assess the potential for Glyphosphate exposure to humans through the consumption of honey, pancake and corn syrup, as well as soy sauce, soy milk, and tofu. Residues above the limit of quantification (LOQ) were found in 41 of the 69 samples of honey and ten of the twenty soy sauce samples analyzed. Residues above the LOQ were not found in the pancake and corn syrup, soy milk, or tofu samples. Of the eleven organic honey samples analyzed, five were found to contain glyphosphate residues above the LOQ.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

California City Managers, 2015 Report. Grassroots Lab. Jan. 23, 2015. 6 p.

<http://www.grassrootslab.com/sites/all/files/StatusCACityManagers2015.pdf>

This report provides a snapshot of the 473 city managers in California and trends in their education and professional background, salary, and gender diversity. Key findings include: titles and positions vary, depending upon the size and structure of city council; roughly 71% of the state’s city managers earned their graduate degree within California; only 76 cities out of the 473 cities in the state with city managers are led by female city managers (19%), and at the county level, 23 (40%) of California’s counties, have no cities with female city managers. The report ends in noting the difficulties encountered by ambiguous titles and availability of salary and benefits data.

HEALTH

“The Great Sleep Recession: Changes in Sleep Duration Among US Adolescents, 1991-2012.”

By Katherine M. Keyes, et al. *Pediatrics*, vol. 153 no. 3 (Mar. 2015) 11 p.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/02/10/peds.2014-2707.abstract>

“Students in the 8th, 10th and 12th grades of a nationally representative survey of more than 270,000 adolescents from 1991 to 2012 reported how often they get seven or more hours of sleep.... Racial/ethnic minorities and those whose parents had little formal education said they were less likely to regularly get seven or more hours of sleep, yet they were more likely to report getting adequate sleep, suggesting a mismatch between actual sleep and perceptions of adequate sleep.... Inadequate sleep is associated with a wide range of health problems including mental health issues, academic problems, substance abuse, and weight gain.” (*Science Daily*, Feb. 15, 2015).

HUMAN SERVICES

Reducing Child Poverty in the US: Costs and Impacts of Policies Proposed by the Children’s Defense Fund. By Linda Giannarelli, et al. Urban Institute. Jan. 2015. 168 p.

<http://www.urban.org/publications/2000086.html>

“[This report estimated] how much child poverty could be reduced by a comprehensive set of policies—increasing the minimum wage, providing transitional jobs, expanding subsidized housing and child care, increasing food assistance, increasing federal income tax credits, and changing how child support is counted in determining benefits.... [T]he full package of policies would reduce the number of poor children by 60%—from 10.9 million to 4.3 million.” The first and second most effective individual policies are “expanded access to housing vouchers for low-income households with children” and “increased SNAP benefits,” which reduce poverty by 21% and 16.2%, respectively.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Diversity Explosion: The Cultural Generation Gap Mapped. By William Frey. Brookings. Feb. 19, 2015.

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2015/diversity-explosion>

There is a growing generation gap in the United States, revolving around the changing racial and ethnic diversity of younger generations versus the predominantly white makeup of older generations. This generational change is taking place at different times in different parts of the country. A new interactive map illustrates the regional variation in generational diversity by mapping the “racial composition of different age groups at the county and metropolitan area scales.... Greater diversity can be seen among counties located in the nation’s Southeast, Southwest and coasts. By selecting a different race/ethnicity from the menu, maps highlighting different aspects of this diversity associated with blacks, Hispanics, Asians and persons with two or more races can be explored. Hovering over each county reveals a chart depicting the extent of the ‘cultural generation gap’ in that county.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Autonomous Vehicle Implementation Predictions: Implications for Transport Planning. By Todd Litman. Victoria Transport Policy Institute. Jan. 29, 2015. 21 p.

<http://www.vtpi.org/avip.pdf>

“This report explores the impacts that autonomous (also called self-driving, driverless or robotic) vehicles are likely to have on travel demands and transportation planning. It discusses autonomous vehicle benefits and costs, predicts their likely development and implementation based on experience with previous vehicle technologies, and explores how they will affect planning decisions such as optimal road, parking and public transit supply.... [S]ome benefits, such as independent mobility for affluent non-drivers, may begin in the 2020s or 2030s, but most impacts, including reduced traffic and parking congestion (and therefore road and parking facility supply requirements), independent mobility for low-income people (and therefore reduced need to subsidize transit), increased safety, energy conservation and pollution reductions, will only be significant when autonomous vehicles become common and affordable, probably in the 2040s to 2060s.”

VETERANS

Review of Alleged Mismanagement of Informal Claims Processing at VA Regional Office Oakland, California. U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General. Feb. 18, 2015. 12 p.

<http://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-14-03981-119.pdf>

“The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ regional office in Oakland shoved thousands of compensation and disability claims into a filing cabinet without processing them, leaving many veterans or their surviving family members without needed benefits, the agency’s inspector general said in a report issued Wednesday. The claims, which dated back as far as the mid-1990s, were discovered in 2012 as a national scandal erupted over the VA’s sloppy and slow handling of benefits, which outraged veterans. The report said the office in 2012 counted 13,184 informal claims for benefits that had been found in the cabinet, with 2,155 requiring ‘review or action.’ Those files were assigned to a special team, the report said, but later, in spring 2014, office workers found a cart of the claims that the team had reviewed but failed to act upon.” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 18, 2015).

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