



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

2014 Outcome Evaluation Report. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. July 2015. 73 p.

http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Adult_Research_Branch/Research_Documents/2014_Outcome_Evaluation_Report_7-6-2015.pdf

This report is the fifth in a series of annual reports on the outcomes of inmates released from California prisons to measure recidivism rates of prisoners released three years ago. The report tracks improvement and compares California's performance with that of other states. Of the 104,981 offenders released from prison during fiscal year 2009-2010, 54.3% returned to prison, a 6.7% decrease from fiscal year 2008-2009's return rate of 61%. Parole violations decreased by 4.4% between FY 2008-2009 and FY 2009-2010, which "account[ed] for the largest portion of the decrease in the three-year return-to-prison rate." The report states that Realignment was the primary reason for the recidivism rate and parole violation decreases.

ECONOMY

Business Blackout: The Insurance Implications of a Cyber Attack on the U.S. Power Grid. University of Cambridge Centre for Risk Studies, et al. July 2015. 68 p.

<http://www.lloyds.com/~media/files/news%20and%20insight/risk%20insight/2015/business%20blackout/business%20blackout20150708.pdf#search=%27Business%20Blackout:%20The%20Insurance%20Implications%20of%20a%20Cyber%20Attack%27>

This report “considers the insurance implications of a cyber attack on the US power grid.” Lloyds created a hypothetical scenario wherein the power grid is shut down indefinitely in 9 eastern states. “Economic impacts include direct damage to assets and infrastructure, decline in sales revenue to electricity supply companies, loss of sales revenue to business and disruption to the supply chain. The total impact to the US economy is estimated at \$243bn, rising to more than \$1trn in the most extreme version of the scenario.” The report cautions this scenario is implausible yet technologically possible, and is meant as an exercise in risk analysis.

EDUCATION

State Funding for Students with Disabilities. By Maria Millard, et al. Education Commission of the States. June 2015. 7 p.

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/19/47/11947.pdf>

This brief provides an overview of how the 50 states fund programs for students with disabilities. There are three main forms of funding: formula, categorical and reimbursement. Each type of funding has its advantages and disadvantages: formula and reimbursement funding are considered transparent, with formula funding providing equity and a predictable source of funding. Categorical funding allows for more targeted use of funds. However, categorical funding is less predictable, and it, along with reimbursement funding, can be a little too narrow in focus. California utilizes a categorical formula based on Census data.

EMPLOYMENT

State and Local Government Workforce: 2015 Trends. Center for State and Local Government Excellence. June 2015. 8 p.

http://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/15-06-State-Local-Gov-Workforce-2015-Trends_final-web-new1.pdf

Three-hundred and thirty-six state and local government human resource managers from two international and national associations reported that hiring and retirements were up since previous surveys. “For the sixth year in a row, a majority of respondents (53% in this survey) reported making changes to health care benefits. Shifting costs to employees, such as higher premiums, copayments, and deductibles, was reported by 43% of respondents.... For many governments, there is a sense of urgency about recruitment, retention, and succession planning. As one respondent wrote, ‘Between now and 2020, we are looking at 40% of the workforce being able to retire.’ Other top-ranked workforce concerns were staff development, competitive compensation packages, and being able to retain the staff needed for core services.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Conversations for Workable Government. Little Hoover Commission. Report #227. June 2015. 103 p.

<http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/227/Report227.pdf>

California has long sought to create a strong, open government through transparency laws that “balance the public’s right to observe and participate in government with officials’ need to effectively administer it. In the past that balance could often tilt toward excessive secrecy.” This report recommends minor adjustments to statutes that would provide public officials with an increased flexibility to discuss general policy issues among themselves outside of public meetings without reaching agreement on votes or decisions. It also recommends retaining and enforcing ex parte policies regarding private conversations intending to influence decision makers.

HEALTH

“Geographic Disparity of Severe Vision Loss—United States, 2009-2013.” By Karen A. Kirtland, et al. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 64 no. 19 (May 22, 2015) pp. 513-517.

<http://www.cdc.gov/MMWR/pdf/wk/mm6419.pdf>

Using American Community Survey 5-year county estimates, this report demonstrates a correlation between counties with higher poverty levels and higher levels of severe vision loss (SVL). “Counties with high prevalence of SVL tended to be those with high poverty levels. Further investigations are needed to better understand the socio-demographic disparities of vision loss, how to minimize risk factors associated with vision loss, and how to improve access and use of eye care services. To reduce risks for vision loss, counties with high rates of SVL can promote healthy eating, maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking, understanding one’s family eye health history, using proper eye-safety practices, and routine eye examinations.”

HUMAN SERVICES

Child Protective Services May Link Families to Needed Income Supports. By Wendy A. Walsh, et al. Carsey School of Public Policy. Spring 2015. 4 p.

<http://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1241&context=carsey>

This study examined whether families reported for child maltreatment issues receive public safety-net programs, and whether Child Protective Services [CPS] engages in linking those families to programs. “Over time, CPS intervention may link individuals to needed services. Of caregivers who report they are struggling to make it and receiving no services at the time of the child maltreatment report, 40% report receiving services eighteen months later. And nearly half then report they are no longer struggling to make it. There were some differences in receiving these income supports by place of residence.” More rural (51%) than urban (38%) families received income supports eighteen months after the child maltreatment report.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Understanding Airport Air Quality and Public Health Studies Related to Airports. By Brian Kim, et al. Airport Cooperative Research Program. June 2015. 104 p.
http://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/acrp/acrp_rpt_135.pdf

This report “provides airport industry stakeholders with an overview of what is known and not known regarding the impact of airport activity on air quality and public health. The report effectively communicates key information about this technically challenging and frequently sensitive topic through the use of frequently asked questions, a topic overview, critiques of recent studies, and recommendations for further research. The report will help practitioners address air quality and public health issues that may arise at their airport.”

Alternative Funding and Financing Mechanisms for Passenger and Freight Rail Projects. By Christopher W. Jenks, et al. National Cooperative Rail Research Program. May 2015. Report. 195 p.: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/ncrrp/ncrrp_rpt_001.pdf
Summary. 15 p.: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/ncrrp/ncrrp_rpt_001_ReportSummary.pdf

This report “provides approaches and mechanisms to help fund and finance rail projects and services that have a funding gap. It is not intended to prescribe or recommend specific funding or financing tools, nor are all the funding and financing mechanisms ... appropriate for every project. Rather [it] is intended as a resource for policymakers, planners, and other stakeholders in identifying and considering potential funding and financing models for use in realizing specific projects.” With a funding gap of \$44.8 billion, California high-speed rail is one of five case studies considered in the report.

VETERANS

Better Serving Those Who Serve: California's LGBT Veterans Speak Out. California Research Bureau. June 2015.
Report. 40 p.: http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/15/WhitePaper_6_30_15.pdf
Executive Summary. 3 p.: <http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/15/ExecutiveSummary.pdf>

“Though more than 136,000 gay and lesbian veterans live in California—the largest number in any state—little is known about their specific needs.... To ensure these veterans receive the benefits they have earned, the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), together with a planning committee, and with support from the California Research Bureau, convened lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) veterans, spouses and support organizations to identify, explore and discuss the needs of this diverse group.” Participants made a series of recommendations to address housing and educational needs, as well as employment gaps.

About *Studies in the News*

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