



## Studies in the News

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Distracted driving has increased 1.6% since 2014

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT**

***Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009-2013—Statistical Tables.*** By Erika Harrell. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. May 2015. 23 p.

<http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/capd0913st.pdf>

“The rate of violent victimization against persons with disabilities (36 per 1,000) was more than twice the age-adjusted rate for persons without disabilities (14 per 1,000) in 2013. Persons with disabilities experienced 1.3 million violent victimizations, accounting for 21% of all violent victimizations. Nonfatal violent crimes include rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.... The statistical tables in this report detail the level and rates of nonfatal violent victimization against persons with and without disabilities, describes the types of disabilities, and compare victim characteristics.”

## CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***Black Child Poverty Rate Holds Steady, Even as Other Groups See Declines.*** By Eileen Patten, et al. Pew Research Center. July 14, 2015.

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/07/14/black-child-poverty-rate-holds-steady-even-as-other-groups-see-declines/>

“The share of American children living in poverty has declined slightly since 2010 as the nation’s economy has improved. But the poverty rate has changed little for black children, the group most likely to be living in poverty.... In fact, the number of impoverished white children (4.1 million) may have dipped below the number of impoverished black children (4.2 million) for the first time since the U.S. Census began collecting this data in 1974, though this difference was not statistically significant.”

## ECONOMY

***State of the Cities 2015.*** By Micah Farver, et al. National League of Cities. July 9, 2015. 36 p.

<http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/city-solutions-and-applied-research/state-of-the-cities-2015>

“The National League of Cities (NLC) publishes its State of the Cities report to provide a comprehensive analysis of city trends based on annual State of the City addresses from mayors across the country. Our State of the Cities 2015 analysis is derived from 100 cities and represents a diverse cross section of population sizes and geographic regions.” The report finds that “[f]or the second consecutive year, economic development was the most commonly addressed topic in mayoral speeches, with three out of four speeches (75%) in this year’s sample devoting significant coverage to the issue. Issues concerning infrastructure (57%), public safety (55%) and budgets (43%) were also commonly addressed.”

## EDUCATION

***State Homeschool Policies: A Patchwork of Provisions.*** By Micah Ann Wixom. Education Commission of the States. July 2015. 5 p.

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/20/42/12042.pdf>

State homeschooling policies vary greatly from state to state. This report examines these variances on several points: notification of intent to homeschool, instructor qualifications, subjects required to be taught, attendance, assessment requirements, participation in extracurricular or academic programs at nearby public schools, and online school participation. Among the findings: only 13 states require homeschool instructors to have minimum qualifications—typically a high school degree; 29 states “direct homeschool instructors to provide instruction in certain subjects,” with some requiring evidence that these courses are being taught; and only 12 of the 20 states mandating some form of assessment also require standardized testing. Very few states address students attending online schools and the potential for this population to be categorized as home-schooled.

## EMPLOYMENT

***Registered Nurses Have Highest Employment in Healthcare Occupations; Anesthesiologists Earn the Most.*** Bureau of Labor Statistics. July 13, 2015. 2 p.

<http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2015/registered-nurses-have-highest-employment-in-healthcare-occupations-anesthesiologists-earn-the-most.htm>

“In May 2014, there were 11.8 million workers employed in healthcare practitioner, technical, and support occupations. Among those, 2.7 million were registered nurses, the largest occupation. Anesthesiologists earned the most, with an average annual wage of \$246,320. Among ... support occupations .... there were 1.4 million nursing assistants. The average annual wage for nursing assistants was \$26,250. Also in this group, home health aides had 799,080 workers. Healthcare practitioners were among the highest paid healthcare occupations. In addition to anesthesiologists, those earning an average annual wage over \$200,000 included surgeons, obstetricians and gynecologists, oral and maxillofacial surgeons, and orthodontists.”

## ENERGY

***Wind Diversity Enhancement of Wyoming/California Energy Projects: Phase 2.***

**By Jonathan Naughton.** Wind Energy Research Center. July 2015. 39 p.

[http://wyia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/WIAWYCADivStdyPhsII\\_final.pdf](http://wyia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/WIAWYCADivStdyPhsII_final.pdf)

“An analysis of combining renewable energy assets from California and Wyoming has been carried out to determine the benefits of geographical diversity of renewable energy assets. To accomplish this, wind data from meteorological towers in Wyoming were combined with production data from California. The current results support those of an earlier study that only used modeled data in that both studies found a beneficial decrease in correlations between favorable sites and evidence of diversity in diurnal and seasonal production.... The results clearly show that ... Wyoming wind when combined with California’s own renewables provides a better electrical product (as characterized by the REQMs) than California’s indigenous renewables alone can provide.”

## ENVIRONMENT

***Increasing Elevation of Fire in the Sierra Nevada and Implications for Forest Change.***

**By Mark W. Schwartz, et al.** *Ecosphere*. July 2015. 10 p.

<http://www.esajournals.org/doi/full/10.1890/ES15-00003.1>

A team led by researchers at UC Davis has found that the number and size of forest fires in the high Sierra have increased substantially from the pattern observed 100 years ago. Climate change is pointed to as a plausible cause of this increase, although other causes could be contributing factors, such as changes in fire management strategies, increased presence of humans (and therefore higher risk of accidental fires), or sampling bias in the data. The researchers warn that this increased prevalence of fire could accelerate shifts in the vegetation cover in the Sierras, changes which are already predicted due to climate change models.

## HEALTH

***Health Insurance Companies and Plan Rates for 2016: Keeping the Individual Market in California Affordable (Preliminary Rates).*** Covered California. July 27, 2015. 79 p.

<http://www.coveredca.com/PDFs/7-27-CoveredCA-2016PlanRates-prelim.pdf>

“Residents of Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties with health insurance purchased through Covered California will see higher rate increases on average for 2016 than any place else in the state. The average rate hike for those three counties—which make up pricing region 9—is 12.8% vs. an average of 4% statewide. The difference is due to competition among providers, according to Peter Lee, executive director of Covered California.... Lee said the statewide average increase reflected ‘another year of good news for California’s consumers and further evidence that the Affordable Care Act is working.’ But he acknowledged that ‘health care is local and provider competition based on where you live is the key driver of underlying costs.’” (*Santa Cruz Sentinel*, July 27, 2015).

## HUMAN SERVICES

***How the Child and Adult Care Food Program Improves Early Childhood Education.***

**By Christine Binder, et al. Center for American Progress. June 2015. 21 p.**

<https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CACFP-report-6.10.pdf>

“One of the many tools the nation has to support low-income families and their young children is the Child and Adult Care Food Program, or CACFP.... CACFP provides snacks and meals to more than 3 million children at child care centers, family day care homes, Head Start programs, after-school programs, and homeless shelters.... The upcoming federal child nutrition reauthorization, or CNR, process provides Congress the opportunity to support early childhood through CACFP. This report makes a case for why Congress should include provisions in the CNR bill to reduce participation barriers for programs and providers and maximize the program’s potential.”

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***Observational Study of Cell Phone and Texting Use Among California Drivers 2015 and Comparison to 2011 through 2014 Data.*** Ewald and Wasserman Research Consultants, LLC.

**Apr. 2015. 28 p.**

<http://www.ots.ca.gov/pdf/2015-Cell-Phone-Observational-Survey.pdf>

This California study looks at distracted driving caused by electronic devices used by drivers. Factors such as gender, location, age of driver, time of observation, region, presence of children, passenger and vehicle characteristics are considered. Overall, distracted driving due to device use has increased by 1.6% since 2014. Holding a phone to the ear (0.6%), use of a headset (0.5%), and manipulating a handheld device (1.1%) also increased. More males in suburban areas and in the 16-24 age range used electronic devices when driving. Drivers in the Central region were observed using fewer electronic devices, whereas drivers in the Southern region used more of them.

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