



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Pretrial Detention and Jail Capacity in California. By Sonya Tafoya. Public Policy Institute of California. July 2015. 8 p.

http://www.pplic.org/main/publication_quick.asp?i=1154

"California's recently passed Proposition 47, which downgraded some non-serious, non-violent drug possession and property crimes to misdemeanors, has eased some of the state's jail overcrowding issues in the short term. But counties will probably need a range of options, including pretrial services programs, to overcome long-term jail capacity. Because these programs rely on detention only for those defendants who pose the highest risk of pretrial misconduct ... they offer a promising approach to handling the state's high level of pretrial detainees.... [P]retrial services programs focuses pretrial decision making squarely

on risk of pretrial misconduct ... [and] they offer counties an opportunity to better manage pretrial populations while also reinforcing the integrity of their local justice systems.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***Across Racial Lines, More Say Nation Needs to Make Changes to Achieve Racial Equality.* Pew Research Center. Aug. 5, 2015. 11 p.**

<http://www.people-press.org/2015/08/05/across-racial-lines-more-say-nation-needs-to-make-changes-to-achieve-racial-equality/>

“Over the past year, there has been a substantial rise in the share of Americans—across racial and ethnic groups—who say the country needs to continue making changes to give blacks equal rights with whites, and a growing number of Americans view racism as a big problem in society.... Though a substantial racial divide in these views remains, a majority of whites (53%) now say more needs to be done.... Growing shares in all regions of the country, and across all demographic and partisan groups say both that racism is a big problem and that more needs to be done to achieve racial equality. Still, significant partisan divides remain on these questions, with Republicans less likely than Democrats to hold these views.”

ECONOMY

***The Rising Cost of Wildfire Operations: Effects on the Forest Service’s Non-Fire Work.* U.S. Forest Service. Aug. 4, 2015. 17 p.**

<http://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/2015-Rising-Cost-Wildfire-Operations.pdf>

“This report documents the growth over the past 20 years of the portion of the Forest Service’s budget that is dedicated to fire, and the debilitating impact those rising costs are having on the recreation, restoration, planning, and other activities of the Forest Service. In 1995, fire made up 16% of the Forest Service’s annual appropriated budget—this year, for the first time, more than 50% of the Forest Service’s annual budget will be dedicated to wildfire.... Left unchecked, the share of the budget devoted to fire in 2025 could exceed 67%, equating to reductions of nearly \$700 million from non-fire programs compared to today’s funding levels.... [A]ny solution must confront both parts of the funding quandary: it must limit or reverse the runaway growth of firefighting costs, and it must address the compounding disruption of fire transfers.” Federal agencies own and operate 19 million acres (57%) of California’s forest land.

EDUCATION

***Beyond College Rankings: A Value-Added Approach to Assessing Two- and Four-Year Schools.* By Jonathan Rothwell, et al. Brookings Institution. Apr. 2015. 52 p.**

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Reports/2015/04/29-college-value-add/BMPP_CollegeValueAdded.pdf

This report analyzes college “value-added,” the difference between actual alumni outcomes (like salaries) and the outcomes one would expect given a student’s characteristics and type of institution. Value-added captures the benefits that accrue from aspects of college quality measures such as graduation rates and the market value of the skills a college teaches, as well as unmeasurable aspects.

Rethinking Teacher Preparation: Empowering Local Schools to Solve California's Teacher Shortage and Better Develop Teachers. By Sara Mead, et al., Bellwether Education Partners. July 2015. 52 p.

http://bellwethereducation.org/sites/default/files/Bellwether_TFA-CA.pdf

California is facing a critical shortage of teachers. This report offers recommendations on how school districts and teacher preparation programs can work together to alleviate the shortage—by matching hiring needs with “completer outcomes” in teacher programs and aligning district standards and expectations with preparation program standards. State policy makers are brought into the loop with several recommendations. Among them: holding teacher preparation programs accountable for how they meet needs of districts and teacher candidates and holding districts accountable for developing their own “teacher preparation pipelines.”

EMPLOYMENT

How California's Workplace is Changing and Why State Policy Has to Change with It. By Luke Reidenbach. California Budget and Policy Center. Sep. 2015. 32 p.

<http://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/how-californias-workforce-is-changing-and-why-state-policy-has-to-change-with-it/>

“The face of California's workforce is changing.... Today more than one in three California workers are Latino, and another one in seven are Asian or Pacific Islander.... Black and Latino workers face a persistently higher rate of unemployment [and] ... median wages for black and Latino workers have declined over the last 35 years.... State policy in California has not kept up with the transforming role of women in the workplace. While there has been an increase in the share of households where all parents work, this has not been met with policies that expand access to affordable child care.”

ENVIRONMENT

In the Name of the Environment: Litigation Abuse Under CEQA. By Jennifer L. Hernandez, et al. Holland & Knight. Aug. 2015. 140 p.

<http://www.hklaw.com/publications/In-the-Name-of-the-Environment-Litigation-Abuse-Under-CEQA-August-2015/>

(Registration Required)

The law firm Holland & Knight conducted a comprehensive study of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lawsuits filed between 2010 and 2012. The authors evaluated the litigation to determine whether or not it supported the state's environmental, social equity and economic priorities. “Projects designed to advance California's environmental policy objectives are the most frequent targets of CEQA lawsuits: transit is the most frequently challenged type of infrastructure project, renewable energy is the most frequently challenged type of industrial/utility project, and housing (especially higher density housing) is the most frequently challenged type of private sector project.” The authors also found that CEQA litigation overwhelmingly targets infill projects, rather than projects that increase sprawl.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

“Federal Spending Traceable to States.” Federal Funds Information for States. *State Policy Reports*, vol. 33, issue 15-16 (Aug. 2015) 18 p.

(Available at the California State Library)

“This issue ... provides a summary of detail released by The Pew Charitable Trusts, which has cataloged federal spending by state from fiscal year (FY) 2004 to FY 2013.... Per capita figures listed here reflect

population estimates for July 1, 2013. This issue also looks back at changes in federal spending since FY 2008, shedding light on spending trends that have taken place over the five-year period.”

HEALTH

“Vital Signs: Predicted Heart Age and Racial Disparities in Heart Age Among U.S. Adults at the State Level.” By Quanhe Yang, et al. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 64, no. 34 (Sep. 4, 2015) pp. 950-958.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/wk/mm6434.pdf>

Interactive map: <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/heartage/index.html>

“Your heart may be older than you are—and that’s not good. According to a new CDC Vital Signs report, 3 out of 4 U.S. adults have a predicted heart age that is older than their actual age. This means they are at higher risk for heart attacks and stroke. ‘Heart age’ is the calculated age of a person’s cardiovascular system based on his or her risk factor profile. The risks include high blood pressure, cigarette smoking, diabetes status, and body mass index as an indicator for obesity. This is the first study to provide population-level estimates of heart age and to highlight disparities in heart age nationwide. The report shows that heart age varies by race/ethnicity, gender, region, and other sociodemographic characteristics.” (*Press Release*, Sep.1, 2015).

HUMAN SERVICES

Understanding the Geography of Growth in Rural Child Poverty. By David McGranahan. U. S. Department of Agriculture. July 6, 2015. 22 p.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2015-july/understanding-the-geography-of-growth-in-rural-child-poverty.aspx#.VeSvGZfG-ao>

“More than one in four rural children are living in families that are poor, according to the official poverty measure, up from 1 in 5 in 1999, but this change was uneven across the rural landscape.... Counties with high vulnerability to child poverty, those with both low young adult education levels and high proportions of children in single-parent families, were generally the most hard-hit by the recession of the past decade and experienced substantial increases in their already high child poverty rates.... Along with the recession, an increase in rural children in single-parent households, continuing from the 1990s, was a major contributor to the rise in child poverty after 2000.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Who Drives to Work? Commuting by Automobile in the United States: 2013. By Brian McKenzie. U. S. Census Bureau. Aug. 2015. 28 p.

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/commuting/files/2014/acs-32.pdf>

“This report focuses on patterns of commuting by private vehicle among U.S. workers in 2013. It highlights differences in rates of automobile commuting by key population characteristics such as age, race, ethnicity, and the types of communities in which workers live.” The findings include the following facts: “About 86% of U.S. workers commuted to work by automobile in 2013; 3 out of 4 commuters drove alone... At 76.6% of workers, driving alone to work peaked in 2010.... The rate of carpooling has declined during each decade since 1980. About 9.0% of workers carpoled in 2013, down from 19.7% in 1980.”

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