



## Studies in the News

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## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT**

***Crime in 2015: A Final Analysis.* By Ames Grawert, et al. Brennan Center for Justice. Apr. 2016.**

**11 p.**

[https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/analysis/Crime\\_in\\_2015\\_A\\_Final\\_Analysis.pdf](https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/analysis/Crime_in_2015_A_Final_Analysis.pdf)

“[This] analysis examines crime in the 30 largest cities from 2014 to 2015, with 25 cities reporting data on murder through the end of 2015 and 22 reporting data on crime.... [C]rime overall in the 30 largest cities in 2015 remained the same as in 2014, decreasing by 0.1% across cities. Two-thirds of cities saw drops in crimes, which were offset mostly by an increase in Los Angeles (12.7%).... Violent crime rose slightly, by 3.1%. This result was primarily caused by increasing violence in Los Angeles (25.2%), Baltimore (19.2%), and Charlotte (15.9%). Notably, aggravated assaults in Los Angeles account for more than half of the rise in violent crime in these cities.... [T]he 2015 murder rate rose by 13.2% in the 30 largest cities, with 19 cities seeing increases and six decreases.”

## CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***World Happiness Report 2016: Volume I.*** Edited by John Helliwell, et al. World Happiness Report. Mar. 2016. 70 p.

<http://worldhappiness.report/>

“This year, for the first time, the World Happiness Report gives a special role to the measurement and consequences of inequality in the distribution of well-being among countries and regions. In previous reports the editors have argued that happiness provides a better indicator of human welfare than do income, poverty, education, health and good government measured separately. In a parallel way, they now argue that the inequality of well-being provides a broader measure of inequality. They find that people are happier living in societies where there is less inequality of happiness. They also find that happiness inequality has increased significantly (comparing 2012-2015 to 2005-2011) in most countries, in almost all global regions, and for the population of the world as a whole.”

## EDUCATION

***K-12 Education: Better Use of Information Could Help Agencies Identify Disparities and Address Racial Discrimination.*** By Jacqueline M. Nowicki, et al. Government Accountability Office.

GAO-16-345. Apr. 2016. 108 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/676745.pdf>

This report outlines challenges faced by the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice in using data to address racial discrimination and to minimize disparities. The authors recommend that “the Secretary of Education direct Education’s Office for Civil Rights to more routinely analyze its Civil Rights Data Collection by school groupings and types of schools across key elements to further explore and understand issues and patterns of disparities.” The authors recommend that the Attorney General direct the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division to “systematically track key summary information across its portfolio of open desegregation cases and use this data to inform its monitoring of these cases.” The authors suggest these actions could help identify patterns of racial discrimination and improve enforcement efforts.

***State Policy Leadership for the Future: History of State Coordination and Governance and Alternatives for the Future.*** By Aims McGuinness. Education Commission of the States. May 2016. 60 p.

<http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/051616-State-Policy-Leadership-for-the-Future-KL-final4-1.pdf>

This paper offers an historical look at postsecondary governance in the United States from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. The author documents how “postsecondary governance arrangements have ebbed and flowed over our nation’s history in response to changes in state needs, fiscal and political conditions, and the expectations of governing authorities to drive specified outcomes of our institutions of higher learning. Postsecondary governance structures matter to different constituent groups for different reasons. This paper touches on most of those constituent groups and perspectives, and we believe serves as a foundational document to inform and shape our current and future conversations about postsecondary governance reform.”

## EMPLOYMENT

***Demystifying the Gender Pay Gap.*** By Dr. Andrew Chamberlain. Glassdoor. Mar. 2016. 49 p.

<https://research-content.glassdoor.com/app/uploads/sites/2/2016/03/Glassdoor-Gender-Pay-Gap-Study.pdf>

Glassdoor, an international jobs and recruiting service, conducted a survey of employers to examine the gender pay gap phenomenon in five countries. “The single biggest cause of the gender pay gap is occupation and industry sorting of men and women into jobs that pay differently throughout the

economy.... Past research suggests this is due partly to social pressures that divert men and women into different college majors and career tracks, or to other gender norms such as women bearing disproportionate responsibility for child and elderly care, which pressures women into more flexible jobs with lower pay.”

## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

***Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2014.* U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Apr. 2016. 558 p.**

<https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/usinventoryreport.html>

The Environmental Protection Agency's annual report tracks total annual U.S. emissions and removals by source, economic sector, and greenhouse gas going back to 1990. “Key findings from the 1990-2014 U.S. Inventory include: in 2014, U.S. greenhouse gas emissions totaled 6,870 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents, U.S. emissions increased by 1.0% from 2013 to 2014, recent trends can be attributed to multiple factors driving increased fuel use including year-to-year changes in the prevailing weather and an increase in miles traveled by on-road vehicles, greenhouse gas emissions in 2014 were 9% below 2005 levels.”

**“Trace Elements in Stormflow, Ash, and Burned Soil following the 2009 Station Fire in Southern California.”** By Carmen A. Burton, et al. *PLoS ONE*, vol. 11, no. 5 (May 2016) 26 p.

<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/asset?id=10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0153372.PDF>

“Elevated levels of trace metals such as iron, lead, nickel and zinc were found in streams of the San Gabriel Mountains north of Los Angeles, California, at water-quality levels higher than the Environmental Protection Agency's Aquatic Life Ambient Water Quality Criteria, according to a new U.S. Geological Survey study. Scientists linked the contaminants' presence to the 2009 Station Fire in the Angeles National Forest. The study examined the effect of the fire on trace metal contamination in nearby streams, and compared the post-fire storm water quality to criteria for aquatic life, seeking to understand if watershed runoff from the Station Fire burn area could harm local ecosystems.” (*Press Release, U.S. Geological Survey, May 4, 2016*).

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Retirement Security: Low Defined Contribution Savings May Pose Challenges.* Government Accountability Office. GAO-16-408. May 5, 2016. 68 p.**

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/676942.pdf>

“Defined contribution (DC) plans, in which individuals save for their own retirement, have become the dominant form of retirement plan for U.S. workers. However, not all workers have access to or participate in such plans through their employer. DC plans also shift more risk to participants compared to traditional defined benefit (DB) pension plans.... This report focuses on 1) recent trends in DC plan participation and account savings, and 2) how much households could potentially save in DC plans over their careers and how key individual and employer decisions affect saving.”

## HEALTH

***Aliso Canyon Gas Leak: Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER).* Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. May 13, 2016. 49 p.**

<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/gasleak/>

“Public Health has concluded its Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) and an Indoor Environmental Testing Protocol in the Porter Ranch area. Public Health undertook this work because, despite the end of the worst natural gas leak in US history, a majority of

surveyed households reported experiencing symptoms similar to those experienced during the active gas leak even though methane and associated mercaptan levels in the air were markedly reduced.” Testing found low levels of metals in surface dust of Porter Ranch homes could be contributing to symptoms. Public Health has ordered comprehensive cleaning protocols to be paid for by Southern California Gas Company. Public Health says it will continue to monitor environmental and health issues in the area.

## HUMAN SERVICES

***Community Eligibility Adoption Rises for the 2015–2016 School Year, Increasing Access to School Meals.*** By Becca Segal, et al. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Updated May 13, 2016. 28 p. <http://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/4-7-16fa.pdf>

“Community eligibility simplifies the school meal enrollment process for high-poverty schools by enabling them to do away with household meal applications—thereby eliminating a major administrative burden—and serve breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students.... In the 2015–2016 school year, its second year of nationwide availability, more than 18,000 high-poverty schools, in nearly 3,000 school districts across the country, have adopted community eligibility.... This is an increase of about 4,000 schools compared to the prior year, further demonstrating the appeal of the new provision.”

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

***Water Footprint Calculator.*** Grace Communications Foundation. Apr. 2016. <http://www.watercalculator.org/>

This tool “provides a snapshot of how your daily activities and routines impact your water use. The results, reported as your water footprint, are meant to be an estimate that can help you better understand your habits and behaviors and their contribution to your overall water footprint.... The calculations used in the WFC are an estimate. The data is the latest available at the time of creation of the calculator. In some cases, we have used data from studies that looked at personal water use based on individual behaviors. In other cases, we took national data and created statistical averages and values to calculate individual water use.”

### **About *Studies in the News***

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