



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Review of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Monitoring of Contract Prisons. Office of the Inspector General. Aug. 2016. 86 p.

<https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2016/e1606.pdf>

"The report's central conclusion: 'We found that, in most key areas, contract prisons incurred more safety and security incidents per capita than comparable BOP (Bureau of Prisons) institutions and that the BOP needs to improve how it monitors contract prisons in several areas.' Those key areas are contraband, incident reports, lockdowns, inmate discipline, telephone monitoring, grievances, drug testing and sexual misconduct.... BOP's response to the report cautioned against comparing the private prison populations with those in federal facilities. Nonetheless, the agency agreed to the report's four recommendations, including increased verification 'that inmates receive basic medical services such as initial medical exams and immunizations' and 'periodic validation of actual Correctional Officer staffing levels.'" (*Washington Post*, Aug. 12, 2016).

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Many Americans Hear Politics from the Pulpit. Pew Research Center. Aug. 8, 2016. 20 p.
<http://www.pewforum.org/2016/08/08/many-americans-hear-politics-from-the-pulpit/>

“In the new survey, conducted online and by mail June 5-July 7 among a nationally representative sample of 4,602 adults, 40% of Americans reported attending religious services at least once or twice in the few months before the poll was conducted. Within this group, about two-thirds (64%) say they heard clergy at their church or other place of worship speak about at least one of the six social and political issues mentioned in the survey, with nearly half (46%) indicating that religious leaders had spoken out on multiple issues.”

EDUCATION

No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State-by-State. International Education Study Group, National Conference of State Legislatures. Aug. 2016. 28 p.
http://www.ncsl.org/documents/educ/Edu_International_Final_V2.pdf

Alarmed by poor U.S. student performance on international and national assessments, a “bipartisan group of 28 veteran legislators and legislative staff” describes what they learned in their study of ten world regions considered to have model education systems. With a focus on Finland, Ontario and Singapore, the group calls for U.S. states to consider and implement some of the common, successful elements of these systems: 1) a heavy emphasis on teacher preparation and development: creating more rigorous, selective teacher education programs, and instilling teacher peer review and professional development throughout their careers; 2) promoting career technical education along with academic coursework; and 3) providing a strong early education system.

EMPLOYMENT

Early Childhood Workforce Index 2016. By Marcy Whitebook, et al. Center of the Study of Childcare Employment, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, UC Berkeley. July 2016. 16 p.
<http://cscce.berkeley.edu/early-childhood-workforce-index/>

“The people who are paid to watch America’s children tend to live in poverty. Nearly half receive some kind of government assistance: food stamps, welfare money, Medicaid. Their median hourly wage is \$9.77—about \$3 below the average janitor’s.... Wages remain paltry even among the college-educated workforce. Early childhood education is the college major that yields the lowest lifetime pay.... The report’s recommendation: States should pour more money into child care, since the market alone isn’t boosting worker wages. Public money for centers, for example, can give owners the power to raise pay, attracting more skilled and less distracted employees.” (*Washington Post*, July 11, 2016).

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Accounting for California’s Water. By Alvar Escriva-Bou, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. July 2016. 30 p.
http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_716EHR.pdf

“In this report, we identify gaps in California’s water information systems. We recommend that the state adopt an overarching goal of modernizing its water accounting, and that key state agencies—supported by an oversight committee of key stakeholders and independent experts—develop and adopt a common

accounting framework. We outline a dozen priority actions to strengthen water accounting by: improving measurements and estimates of water availability and use; firming up legal claims on water rights and water reserved for the environment; establishing protocols, standards, and models for transparent water accounting at all levels across the state; and making water information more available and accessible to water managers, water users, policymakers, and the public.”

HEALTH

“**Detection of Poly- and Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFASs) in U.S. Drinking Water Linked to Industrial Sites, Military Fire Training Areas, and Wastewater Treatment Plants.**” By Xindi C. Hu, et al. *Environmental Science & Technology Letters*. Published ahead of print Aug. 2016. 7 p. <http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/acs.estlett.6b00260>

“Drinking water supplies for more than six million Americans contain unsafe levels of industrial chemicals that have been linked to cancer and other serious health problems, a U.S. study suggests. The chemicals—known as PFASs (for polyfluoroalkyl and perfluoroalkyl substances)—are used in products ranging from food wrappers to clothing to nonstick cookware to fire-fighting foams. They have been linked with an increased risk of kidney and testicular cancers, hormone disruption, high cholesterol, and obesity.” The study found drinking water from 13 states, including California, accounted for 75% of the unsafe supply, and the highest concentration was found around military bases and industrial sites. (*Reuters*, Aug. 9, 2016).

HUMAN SERVICES

Who is Poor in the United States? By Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, et al. *Brookings*. Jun. 17, 2016. 4 p. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/who-is-poor-in-the-united-states/>

This study describes “characteristics of the 46.7 million Americans—14.8% of the population—who lived in poverty in 2014. Using the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC) collected in March 2015, the source of official poverty statistics, we describe who lives in poverty as well as the characteristics of the working-age poor and those working-age poor who were employed less than full-time year-round.... This analysis suggests that most deviations from full-time, full-year employment are readily explicable in terms of factors like disability, education, or caregiving.”

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Interactive Map Series on College Readiness. Center on Standards, Alignment, Instruction, and Learning (C-SAIL). <http://c-sail.org/maps>

In an effort to measure college- and career-readiness (CCR) standards and how they match up to state standards, C-SAIL has created interactive maps to monitor progress. Their maps provide cross-state comparisons on 1) First-year college- and career-readiness standards expected to be fully implemented across the state 2) First year assessments for Grades 3-8 expected to be fully aligned to college- and career-readiness standards and 3) Tests Used in Grades 3-8 during the 2015-2016 school year.

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