



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

September 7, 2016

Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

FY2010-11 marks 5th consecutive decrease in CA recidivism rate

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Hispanic market & ballot box influence continues to grow

EMPLOYMENT

“Old people jobs” pay less than “young people jobs”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Report levelizes energy resources cost

CA nitrogen fertilizer utilization assessment

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Local taxes favor Uber-style services over other carsharing alternatives

HEALTH

Survey shows physicians lack awareness of upcoming Medicare changes

Virtual dolls may be no quick fix to teen parenting, abortion rates

HUMAN SERVICES

Demographics of WIC recipients

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Determining the safety of autonomous vehicles

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

2015 Outcome Evaluation Report: An Examination of Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2010-11.

Office of Research, California Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Aug. 2016. 87 p.

http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Adult_Research_Branch/Research_Documents/2015_Outcome_Evaluation_Report_8-25-2016.pdf

“The three-year return-to-prison rate for the 95,690 offenders who comprise the Fiscal Year 2010-11 release cohort is 44.6%, which is a 9.7 percentage point decrease from the Fiscal Year 2009-10 rate of 54.3%. Fiscal Year 2010-11 marks the fifth consecutive year the three-year return-to-prison rate has declined and is the most substantial decrease to date.... Until a CDCR cohort is released post-Realignment and an entire three-year follow-up period occurs, the full impact of Realignment on the State’s return-to-prison rate will be unknown. It is expected that the State’s three-year return-to-prison will continue to decrease through the next two fiscal years of releases.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

From the Ballot Box to the Grocery Store: A 2016 Perspective on Growing Hispanic Influence in America. Nielsen. Aug. 2016. 40 p.

<http://www.latinas.org/atf/cf/%7B556081AD-4C65-463C-B792-1965C38C6EA9%7D/BALLOT%20BOX%20REPORT%202016.PDF>

“Hispanic power and influence is surging: 50% of recent U.S. population growth has come from Hispanics and the U.S. Latino population is expected to double within the next two generations. More importantly, the actual reach and influence of the Hispanic market is becoming significantly greater than the 57 million who identify as Hispanic. Marketers are awakening to a new reality in which the ‘size of the prize’ for their products and services is magnified by this intercultural influence.” This report examines the latest trends in Hispanic demographics and the Latino electorate in the United States.

EMPLOYMENT

How Job Options Narrow for Older Workers by Socioeconomic Status. By Matthew S. Rutledge, et al. Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. Aug. 2016. 6 p.

http://crr.bc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/IB_16-13.pdf

This brief looks at the extent to which occupational options narrow for workers as they reach their fifties and sixties, focusing on gender and socioeconomic status. “As men and women 55 and older looking for employment probably suspect, at a certain point the kinds of jobs available to them narrow significantly.... [O]lder workers are finding employment in lower-skilled service jobs. They are 65% more likely to find work in child care, 93% more likely to work as cabdrivers and twice as likely to find work in retail.... [The author] also found that over all, these jobs tended to pay less. Jobs that favor older workers tend to pay 6 to 11% less than jobs that favor younger workers, mostly because these jobs call for less skill.” (*New York Times*, Aug. 18, 2016).

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

The Levelized Cost of Electricity from Existing Generation Resources. By Thomas E. Stacy, et al. Institute for Energy Research. July 2016. 62 p.

http://instituteforenergyresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/IER_LCOE_2016-2.pdf

“In this paper, we analyze publicly available data to establish the average levelized cost of electricity from existing generation sources, or ‘LCOE-E.’... The LCOE-E framework allows for cost comparisons that are relevant for today’s energy policymakers. For example, when all known costs are accurately included in the LCOE calculations, we find that existing coal (\$39.9), nuclear (\$29.1), and hydroelectric resources (\$35.4) are about one-third of the cost of new wind resources (\$107.4) on average and one-fourth of the cost of new PV solar resources (\$140.3). By increasing the transparency of the costs associated with policies favoring new resources over existing conventional resources, we hope to inform policymakers with the best available data and raise the level of the electricity policy debate.”

The California Nitrogen Assessment: Challenges and Solutions for People, Agriculture, and the Environment. By Tom Tomich, et al. UC Davis Agricultural Sustainability Institute. Aug. 2016. 20 p.

http://asi.ucdavis.edu/programs/sarep/research-initiatives/are/nutrient-mgmt/california-nitrogen-assessment/ExecutiveSummaryLayout_FINAL_reduced.pdf

“Nitrogen fertilizer use—synthetic and organic—represents the largest use of nitrogen in the state. Synthetic nitrogen fertilizer application rates per acre increased an average of 25% between 1973 and 2005, in parallel with an increase in food production and a shift from field crops to perennials and vegetable crops. Data show that California crops recover, on average, less than half of applied synthetic

nitrogen, with some crops capturing as little as 30%. Similar or even lower nitrogen recovery rates are found when organic nitrogen sources are used, but some evidence suggests that organic nitrogen sources typically have other benefits such as improved soil health, and the added organic matter from organic nitrogen improves soil structure, hydraulic conductivity, water holding capacity, biotic activity, and nutrient retention.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

When Sharing is Taxing – Comparing the Tax Burden on Carsharing Services in Major U.S. Cities. By Joseph P. Schwieterman, et al. Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development at DePaul University. July 21, 2016. 25 p.

<http://las.depaul.edu/centers-and-institutes/chaddick-institute-for-metropolitan-development/research-and-publications/Documents/WhenSharingIsTaxing-072116-final.pdf>

“Is it cheaper and quicker to hail a ride, via apps such as Uber or Lyft, or to use a car-sharing service, such as Zipcar or Car2Go? In recent years, cities have increased taxes on the car-sharing industry but not ride-hailing.... Of the 40 largest U.S. cities, 29 apply taxes of more than 10% on one-hour car-sharing trips, including nine cities with effective tax rates above 30%.... The taxi industry has long protested that it faces a far heavier regulatory burden than ride-hailing services, putting taxis at an unfair disadvantage. The new research suggests car-sharing has been put a similar disadvantage by local authorities.” (*The Wall Street Journal*, July 22, 2016).

HEALTH

Are Physicians Ready for MACRA and Its Changes? Deloitte Center for Health Solutions. Aug. 2016. 18 p.

<http://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/life-sciences-and-health-care/articles/macra.html>

“The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) aims to fundamentally shift the US health care system to make major cost and quality improvements.... The Deloitte Center for Health Solutions 2016 Survey of US Physicians sheds light on physicians’ awareness of MACRA, their perspectives on its implications, and their readiness for change.” The survey found that 50% of non-pediatric physicians surveyed had never heard of the law, while 32% recognized it by name, but were not familiar with it. Of the physicians familiar with MACRA, 79% said they “do not support tying compensation to quality,” which is a requirement under MACRA. This summary provides a look at the opinions of physicians on a law that could change Medicare payments.

“Efficacy of Infant Simulator Programmes to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy: a School-based Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial in Western Australia.” By Sally A. Brinkman, et al. *Lancet*. Published ahead of print. Aug. 24, 2016.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27570178> (Available at the California State Library)

“Girls who participated in the [Western Australian] virtual infant parenting, or VIP, program were more likely to become pregnant or have an abortion by their early 20s than those who did not, the authors found.... During the study, 1,267 girls took part in the VIP program, while a comparison group of 1,567 did not. The trial period represented three years’ worth of robot interventions, from 2003 and 2006, involving 57 schools in Australia. The authors report that 8% of the girls who cared for infant dolls had at least one baby by age 20, whereas only 4% of the control group did; similarly, 9% of the VIP group had at least one abortion, compared with 6% of the non-doll group during that time.” (*The Washington Post*, Aug. 26, 2016).

HUMAN SERVICES

Fewer Than Half of WIC-Eligible Families Receive WIC Benefits. By Kristin Smith. Carsey Research. July 20, 2016. 8 p.

<http://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1277&context=carsey>

“Fewer than half (43%) of WIC [The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children] income-eligible families with young children received WIC nutrition benefits in 2014. Among eligible families, receipt of WIC benefits was more likely among families in which the head of household was poorer, less educated, non-white, unmarried, or unemployed. About half of eligible families living at less than 50% of the poverty line and one-third living between 100% and 185% of poverty received WIC benefits. Participation in WIC was greater in rural than urban areas (46 versus 42%). Rural foreign-born families reported higher rates of WIC receipt than their urban counterparts (54% versus 44%).”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Driving to Safety: How Many Miles of Driving Would It Take to Demonstrate Autonomous Vehicle Reliability? By Nidhi Kalra, et al. RAND Corporation. 2016. 15 p.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1478.html

“How safe are autonomous vehicles? One proposal to assess safety is to test-drive autonomous vehicles in real traffic, observe their performance, and make statistical comparisons to human driver performance... Given that current traffic fatalities and injuries are rare events compared with vehicle miles traveled, we show that fully autonomous vehicles would have to be driven hundreds of millions of miles and sometimes hundreds of billions of miles to demonstrate their safety in terms of fatalities and injuries... Our findings demonstrate that developers of this technology and third-party testers cannot simply drive their way to safety. Instead, they will need to develop innovative methods of demonstrating safety and reliability.”

About *Studies in the News*

Studies in the News (SITN) is a service provided by the California Research Bureau (CRB), a division of the California State Library. CRB provides independent, nonpartisan research and analysis for the Governor, Legislature, and State Constitutional Officers.

SITN lists of current studies related to public policy issues are e-mailed weekly. Archived issues are available at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb/>.

To add or remove your name from the SITN distribution list, or to update your e-mail address, please contact us at crb@library.ca.gov, or (916) 319-2691.

SITN is available as an RSS feed at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb/>.