



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Homicide in California 2015. Office of the Attorney General. June 2016. 56 p.

<http://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/downloads/pdfs/hm15.pdf>

“[This report] contains information about the crime of homicide and its victims, including demographic data on victims, persons arrested for homicide, persons sentenced to death, peace officers feloniously killed in the line of duty, and justifiable homicides.... There were 1,861 homicides reported in California in 2015. This number represents a 9.7% increase from the 1,697 reported in 2014 and a 25.1% decrease from the 2,483 reported in 2006.” Between 2006 and 2015, the majority of homicide victims were consistently male, between the ages of 18 to 29 years old. Where the victim’s race/ethnicity was identified, 43.3% of the victims were Hispanic, 28.4% were black, 21.3% were white, and 7% were categorized as “other.”

ECONOMY

The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2015. By Trudi Renwick, et al. U.S. Census Bureau. Sep. 13, 2016. 70 p.

<http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-258.pdf>

“Nearly 8 million Californians—1 in 5 state residents (20.6%)—cannot adequately support themselves.... according to new Census figures ... based on the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), a more accurate indicator of economic hardship than the official poverty measure.... The new Census data also show that: California’s high housing costs are a key obstacle preventing more people from getting ahead.... [and] public investments improve the lives of millions of Californians.... Major federal and state programs—including Social Security, CalFresh food assistance, and tax credits for working families, such as the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and child tax credit—lifted an estimated 4.9 million Californians ... above the poverty line each year ... between 2009 and 2012. Without these critical investments, millions more Californians would be struggling to get by.” (*California Budget & Policy Center*, Sep. 13, 2016).

EDUCATION

Preventing Missed Opportunity: Taking Collective Action to Confront Chronic Absence. By Hedy Chang, et al. Attendance Works. Sep. 2016. 36 p.

http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PreventingMissedOpportunityFull_FINAL9.8.16_2.pdf

Using Office of Civil Rights (OCR) data, the authors of this report find that chronic absenteeism is concentrated in 4% of school districts nationwide, and 1% of schools. The concentrations are in areas where there is high poverty, but also in large suburban areas with diverse populations. The authors highlight programs that aim to reduce absenteeism—such as San Francisco’s Hope SF, targeting students in public housing—and offer several ways that OCR data may be used to achieve positive results in reducing absenteeism.

EMPLOYMENT

Labor Force Dynamics in the Great Recession and Its Aftermath: Implications for Older Workers. By Gary Burtless. Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. July 2016. 56 p.

https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/wp_20161-1.pdf

“Unlike prime-age and younger Americans, who have experienced declines in employment and labor force participation since the onset of the Great Recession, Americans over 60 have seen their employment and labor force participation rates increase.... Like workers in all age groups, workers in older groups saw a surge in monthly transitions from employment to unemployment.... In contrast to the unemployed in younger age groups, however, the unemployed in the oldest age groups also saw a drop in their exits to nonparticipation. Compared with the nonaged, this tended to help maintain the labor force participation rates of the old.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

MPS Merchant Services, Inc. v. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 15-73803. United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Sep. 2016. 34 p.

<https://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2016/09/08/15-73803.pdf>

“In consolidated petitions for review brought by various power companies of FERC [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission] determinations that various energy companies committed tariff violations in California during the summer of 2000, the FERC determinations are affirmed where: 1) it did not arbitrarily and capriciously, or abuse its discretion in finding that electric sellers Shell Energy North America, LP, MPS Merchant Services, Inc., and Illinova Corporation violated the Cal-ISO tariff and Market Monitoring and Information Protocol; 2) FERC’s Summer Period determinations regarding APX, Inc., and BP EnergyCo. were not arbitrary, capricious, or an abuse of discretion; and 3) because FERC’s remedial order is not final, the panel lacked appellate jurisdiction over it.” (*FindLaw*, Sep. 8, 2016).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

City of Irvine – Poor Governance of the \$1.7 Million Review of the Orange County Great Park Needlessly Compromised the Review’s Credibility. California State Auditor. Aug. 9, 2016. 75 p.

<http://www.auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2015-116.pdf>

The City of Irvine hired a private accounting firm to conduct a performance review of the Orange County Great Park. The California State Auditor found that the firm did not apply appropriate industry standards for independence and rigor. The consultant selection was modified mid-process: this change affected only one firm’s score and made it the top-ranked (and selected) firm, thus making its impartial selection dubious. Contract mismanagement allowed cost overruns that went unapproved and unseen by city council or the public. Transparency was further reduced by the creation of an unnecessary park review subcommittee that was exempt from state open meeting laws. Greater transparency could have increased accountability and public confidence in the park review.

HEALTH

Families Caring for an Aging America. By Richard Schulz, et al. The National Academies Press. Sep. 2016.

E-book. 340 p.: <http://nationalacademies.org/hmd/reports/2016/families-caring-for-an-aging-america.aspx>
(Free registration required)

Brief. 4 p.: <http://nationalacademies.org/hmd/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2016/Caregiving-RiB.pdf>

“With support from 15 sponsors, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine convened an expert committee to examine what is known about the nation’s family caregivers of older adults and to recommend policies to address their needs and help to minimize the barriers they encounter in acting on behalf of an older adult. The resulting report ... provides an overview of the prevalence and nature of family caregiving of older adults as well as its personal impact on caregivers’ health, economic security, and overall well-being. The report also examines the available evidence on the effectiveness of programs and interventions designed to support family caregivers. It concludes with recommendations for developing a national strategy to effectively engage and support them.”

“State Medical Marijuana Laws and the Prevalence of Opioids Detected Among Fatally Injured Drivers.” By June H. Kim, et al. *American Journal of Public Health*. Published ahead of print. Sep. 15, 2016. 6 p.

<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303426>

“The study, which examined data from 1999 to 2013, found an association between a state legalizing medical marijuana and a reduction in testing positive for opioids after dying in a car accident, particularly among drivers ages 21 to 40.... The study used a sample of 68,394 people who died in a car crash drawing from federal traffic safety data in 18 states. It found people were slightly less likely to test positive for opioids after a state had legalized medical marijuana, which may be prescribed in place of even some prescription painkillers like oxycontin to treat severe or chronic pain. Montana, for instance, had a 1.7% reduction in the number of people who tested positive for opioids after its medical marijuana law went into effect.” (*U.S. News & World Report*, Sep. 15, 2016).

HUMAN SERVICES

Screening and Interventions for Food Insecurity in Health Care Settings: State Strategies to Increase an Underutilized Practice in California. By Melissa Cannon. California Food Policy Advocates. Sep. 2016. 22 p.

http://cfpa.net/CalFresh/CFPAPublications/CFPA-FIScreeningsWhitePaper_FINAL.pdf

One in ten Californians (4.1 million) is food insecure, lacking consistent access to enough food. Yet CalFresh, the state’s largest food assistance program, missed 34% of eligible Californians in 2013. California is the third to last state in the nation at enrolling food-insecure individuals. This report discusses ways to screen eligible residents. “Ensuring food-insecure Californians are being screened and referred effectively to the federal nutrition programs will require the state to adopt multiple strategies. Without effective referral systems that link food-insecure patients with nutrition assistance programs, screening alone will likely not help reduce food insecurity. We encourage state and local health care administrators, health advocates, and health care affiliates to increase the number of health clinics and hospitals that are monitoring and addressing food insecurity effectively within their patient populations.”

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