



## Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

October 26, 2016

*The California Research Bureau is pleased to announce the publication of [A Brief History of Major Tax Changes in California, 1979-2015](#). Since Proposition 13 passed in 1978, California has not had another major revamping of its tax system despite a widely acknowledged need for an overhaul. This paper, originally published in an appendix to Controller Betty Yee's "Comprehensive Tax Reform in California: A Contextual Framework," looks at the frequent incremental changes on taxation California has made, including the Legislature considering an average of 245 tax bills per year over the last two decades.*

Contents this week:

### **CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY**

1.4 million Americans identify as transgender; largest number live in California  
Varying rates of poverty suggest opportunities to boost upward mobility

### **ECONOMY**

Downtown gentrification driven by housing costs

### **EDUCATION**

Accurately counting career- and college-ready high school students

### **EMPLOYMENT**

Working class white male earnings: high school versus college graduates

### **ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**

Sea-level rise on U.S. coasts: policy choices and options

### **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

When unemployment benefits increase, so do hidden credit card fees

### **HEALTH**

79% of health care workers got flu shots in 2015-16

### **TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE**

Can cities reduce sprawl by growing denser?

### **CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY**

*How Many Adults Identify as Transgender in the United States?* By Andrew R. Flores, et al. UCLA School of Law Williams Institute. June 2016. 13 p.

<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/How-Many-Adults-Identify-as-Transgender-in-the-United-States.pdf>

“We find that 0.6% of U.S. adults identify as transgender. This figure is double the estimate that utilized data from roughly a decade ago and implies that ... 1.4 million adults in the U.S. identify as transgender. State-level estimates of adults who identify as transgender range from 0.3% in North Dakota to 0.8% in Hawaii.... The youngest age group, 18 to 24 year olds, is more likely than older age groups to identify as transgender.” California is estimated to have 218,400 adults who identify as transgender.

***What Would Substantially Increased Mobility from Poverty Look Like?* By Gregory Acs, et al. Urban Institute. July 2016. 20 p.**

<http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000871-What-Would-Substantially-Increased-Mobility-from-Poverty-Look-Like.pdf>

“This paper considers different ways to think about mobility from poverty, shows differences in poverty and mobility over time and across people, and illustrates the potential effects of changing underlying patterns and trends on poverty and mobility.... Children, particularly young children, are far more likely to be poor than working-age adults.... Another possible goal for poverty reduction would be bringing the poverty rates of black and Hispanic people in line with those of white people.... Among families with low incomes, even modest savings can buffer the negative effects of economic shocks and support the journey toward greater economic security.”

## **ECONOMY**

***Accounting for Central Neighborhood Change, 1980-2010.* By Nathaniel Baum-Snow, et al. Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. Sep. 2016. 68 p.**

<https://www.chicagofed.org/publications/working-papers/2016/wp2016-09>

Neighborhoods within two kilometers of cities’ business districts declined in population from 1980 to 2000 but have regained much of the loss since 2000. Most of the decline came from residents without a college degree (of all races), while the return of college-educated whites (especially in childless households) formed most of the post-2000 rebound. “[C]hoices to live in central neighborhoods primarily reflect a shifting balance between rising home prices and valuations of local amenities, though 1980-2000 central area population declines also reflect deteriorating nearby labor market opportunities for low skilled whites.”

## **EDUCATION**

***Count All Kids: Using the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Cohort to Improve Transparency and Accountability.* Achieve. Sep. 29, 2016. 5 p.**

<http://www.achievethe.org/publications/count-all-kids-using-9th-grade-cohort-improve-transparency-and-accountability>

State reporting on high school graduation rates is not always an accurate reflection of career-and college-readiness (CCR). “[S]tates could provide a more accurate picture of the college and career readiness of their high school students that sends the message that all students need to graduate college and career ready and incentivizes schools and districts to focus on that goal.” The main recommendation is to include an adjusted cohort of 9<sup>th</sup> graders—including all who were in various subgroups, such as students taking CCR coursework—as part of any formula for calculating success.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

***Comparing Earnings of White Males by Education for Selected Cohorts: High School Versus College Graduates.* By John Coder, et al. Sentier Research. Oct. 2016. 10 p.**

[http://www.sentierresearch.com/StatBriefs/Sentier\\_Income\\_Trends\\_WorkingClassWages\\_1996to2014\\_Brief\\_10\\_05\\_16.pdf](http://www.sentierresearch.com/StatBriefs/Sentier_Income_Trends_WorkingClassWages_1996to2014_Brief_10_05_16.pdf)

“The gap in fortunes between the college-educated [white males] and those with high school degrees or the equivalent has widened dramatically in the past 20 years.... But the sharpening divide highlighted in the study does not tell the whole story of what has happened to the workforce.... In recent years, the proportion of [all] people attending college has grown while the proportion who never attended college has dwindled.... The shrinking group of non-college-educated Americans are the ones who were most likely to fall behind in the past 40 years ... [as] earnings among nonwhite men have followed trends similar to those in the study.” (*The Washington Post*, Oct. 5, 2016)

## **ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**

***Sea-Level Rise and U.S. Coasts: Science and Policy Considerations.* By Peter Folger, et al. Congressional Research Service. Sep. 12, 2016.**

<http://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R44632.pdf>

“Policy choices related to sea-level rise have the potential to shape the future development and resiliency of U.S. coasts. Policy options include a continuation of current government programs and policies, actions that address the forces contributing to sea-level rise globally or locally, and actions that reduce the vulnerability to and consequences of sea-level rise on U.S. coasts. For all the policy options, there are underlying questions of costs and benefits and who bears the costs of pursuing or not pursuing the policies.”

## **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

***Do Credit Card Companies Screen for Behavioral Biases?* By Hong Ru, et al. National Bureau of Economic Research. NBER Working Paper 22360. July 2016. 59 p.**

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w22360> (Available at the California State Library)

“There are substantial differences in the credit card offers that banks extend to different potential customers... [L]ess-educated households were offered higher late fees, over-limit fees, and default penalty rates, as well as more up-front inducements, such as low introductory APRs, cash back, and waivers of annual fees. In contrast, more highly educated households were offered cards with front-loaded features such as stable regular purchasing APRs and low late fees and over-limit fees.... [W]hen a state's unemployment insurance benefits increased, ... banks issued potential borrowers within that state more offers with reward programs, late fees, and default penalties, and ... moved the back-loaded features to the end of the letter.” (*NBER Digest*, Sep. 2016)

## **HEALTH**

**“Influenza Vaccination Coverage Among Health Care Personnel—United States, 2015-16 Influenza Season.” By Carla L. Black, et al. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 65 no. 38 (Sep. 3, 2016) pp. 1026-1031.**

[http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6538a2.htm?s\\_cid=mm6538a2\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6538a2.htm?s_cid=mm6538a2_w)

In Spring 2016, the CDC conducted an opt-in internet panel survey of 2,258 health care workers, and found flu vaccine coverage was “79.0%, similar to coverage during the 2014–15 season. Coverage was highest among physicians, nurse practitioners/physician assistants, nurses, pharmacists, and health care personnel working in hospital settings. Coverage was lowest among assistants and aides and personnel working in long-term care settings.” Higher vaccination coverage was associated with health care facilities where employers required the vaccines. “In the absence of vaccination requirements, expanding the number of health care locations offering vaccination onsite, over multiple days, and at no cost might help sustain and improve influenza vaccination coverage among health care personnel.”

## **TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Can U.S. Cities Compensate for Curbing Sprawl by Growing Denser? By Issi Romen. BuildZoom. Sep. 14, 2016.**

<https://www.buildzoom.com/blog/can-cities-compensate-for-curbing-sprawl-by-growing-denser>

“The U.S. population is projected to continue growing for decades to come, reaching 400 million circa 2050. Accommodating more people at current living standards will require many new homes, but how will cities deliver such housing?” Expanding the size of cities is often opposed in California as “sprawl”. However, “[c]ities that have curbed their expansion have – with limited exception – failed to compensate with densification. As a result they have produced far less housing than they would otherwise, with severe national implications for housing affordability, geographic mobility and access to opportunity, all of which are keenly felt today as we approach the top of another housing cycle.”

### **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](mailto:crb@library.ca.gov), or (916) 319-2691.

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