



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Encryption and Evolving Technology: Implications for U.S. Law Enforcement Investigations.

By Kristin Finklea. Congressional Research Service. R44187. Feb. 18, 2016. 15 p.

<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44187.pdf>

“The technology boundary has received renewed attention as companies have implemented advanced security for their products—particularly their mobile devices. In some cases, enhanced encryption measures have been put in place resulting in the fact that companies ... cannot unlock devices for anyone under any circumstances, not even law enforcement.... There are concerns that enhanced encryption may affect law enforcement investigations.... [F]ollowing the December 2, 2015, terrorist attack in San Bernardino, CA, investigators recovered a cell phone belonging to one of the suspected shooters.... The outcome of (U.S. District Court Case in Ca, Feb. 16, 2016 ordering Apple to unlock the shooter's cell phone) may have implications for how law enforcement and policy makers respond to the broader conversation on enhanced encryption.”

ECONOMY

Shortchanged in Retirement: Continuing Challenges to Women's Financial Future. By Jennifer Erin Brown, et al. National Institute on Retirement Security. Mar. 2016. 36 p.

http://www.nirsonline.org/storage/nirs/documents/Shortchanged/final_shortchanged_report_2016_.pdf

This report “examines the distinct challenges posed by the current retirement system of Social Security, pensions, and savings for working-age women, retirement-aged women, and retired women.” Women and men, on average, have very different retirement incomes to look forward to. Women age 65 and older are nearly twice as likely as men of the same age to be impoverished. Women between the ages of 75 to 79 are three times more likely than men of the same age to be living in poverty. In addition, widowed women are twice as likely to be living in poverty as widowed men. Social Security remains a large source of income for many older households.

EDUCATION

“Males Under-Estimate Academic Performance of Their Female Peers in Undergraduate Biology Classrooms.” By Daniel Z. Grunspan, et al. *PLoS ONE*, vol. 11, no. 2 (Feb. 10, 2016) 16 p.

<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0148405>

“Using social network analysis, we explore how gender influences the confidence that college-level biology students have in each other’s mastery of biology. Results reveal that males are more likely than females to be named by peers as being knowledgeable about the course content.... Females, in contrast, nominated equitably based on student performance rather than gender, suggesting they lacked gender biases in filling out these surveys. These trends persist across eleven surveys taken in three different iterations of the same Biology course. In every class, the most renowned students are always male. This favoring of males by peers could influence student self-confidence, and thus persistence in this STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] discipline.”

EMPLOYMENT

The Gender Wage Gap: Extents, Trends, and Explanations. By Francine D. Blau, et al. National Bureau of Economic Research. NBER Working Paper No. 21913. Jan. 2016. 77 p.

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w21913> (Available at the California State Library)

“The largest factor in the persistent wage gap is the dearth of women in specific jobs and industries, the researchers found. That means that narrowing the wage gap further requires making high-paying, male-dominated industries like STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] fields and tech companies more enticing and welcoming to women. And even before that, encouraging women and girls to take advantage of opportunities to explore and learn about fields like coding and science that remain male-dominated at both the professional and college level. This could help bring up overall wage averages, though it wouldn’t wholly address the gaps that remain between men and women’s salaries even within high-paying industries.” (*The Atlantic*, Feb. 11, 2016).

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Effects of Drought on Forests and Rangelands in the United States: A Comprehensive Science Synthesis. Edited by James M. Vose, et al. United States Forest Service. Jan. 2016. 302 p.

http://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/DROUGHT_book-web-1-11-16.pdf

“This assessment provides input to the reauthorized National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) and the National Climate Assessment (NCA), and it establishes the scientific foundation needed to manage for drought resilience and adaptation. Focal areas include drought characterization; drought impacts on forest processes and disturbances such as insect outbreaks and wildfire; and consequences for forest and rangeland values. Drought can be a severe natural disaster with substantial social and economic consequences. Drought becomes most obvious when large-scale changes are observed; however, even moderate drought can have long-lasting impacts on the structure and function of forests and rangelands without these obvious large-scale changes. Large, stand-level impacts of drought are already underway in the West, but all U.S. forests are vulnerable to drought.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Capitalizing Environmental Justice in the Sacramento Region: Building a Strategic Framework for Regional Action. By Jonathan K. London, et al. UC Davis Center for Regional Change. Feb. 2016. 32 p.

<http://explore.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ourwork/projects/SacEJReportProofFINALforweb2815.pdf>

“This report provides an overview of key Environmental Justice (EJ) issues and initiatives in California’s Capital Region. It aims to serve as a resource for leaders in community organizations, public agencies, elected office, business, philanthropy, and other sectors who are working for a more just, healthy, and equitable region... This report points to environmental issues that disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color, and which also may have profound implications for the entire region’s well-being and sustainability. It does so by highlighting some of the most socially and environmentally vulnerable areas and populations within the Capital Region through the use of data and mapping tools, and presents some key opportunities for environmental justice action.”

HEALTH

Framing San Francisco’s Post-Acute Care Challenge. San Francisco Department of Public Health. Feb. 10, 2016. 80 p.

https://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/hc/HCAgen/HCAgen2016/Feb%2016/Post-Acute%20Care%20Project%20Report_02.10.16.pdf

This report “provides a rare look into the complexities of health care demands for those needing skilled nurses and warns of a bed shortage.... The report found the existing capacity is already showing signs of being strained beyond its limits. On Oct. 1, 2015, Laguna Honda Hospital reported 11 people on its wait-list for long-term care, while the Jewish Home reported 100 people. On Oct. 21, 10 acute care hospitals in San Francisco were having trouble placing 67 patients in skilled nursing situations.... The report makes seven recommendations to address the issue, including establishing a panel to create a more detailed plan, explore incentives or funding options to encourage the creation of skilled nursing beds and expand community programs to care for post-acute care patients.” (*San Francisco Examiner*, Feb. 22, 2016).

HUMAN SERVICES

Unaccompanied Children: HHS Can Take Further Actions to Monitor Their Care. U.S. Government Accountability Office. GAO-16-180. Feb. 2016. 64 p.

<http://gao.gov/assets/680/675001.pdf>

“ORR (Office of Refugee Resettlement) is responsible for coordinating and implementing the care and placement of unaccompanied children [children traveling without their parents or guardians, mostly from Central America]. The number of children placed in ORR’s care rose from nearly 6,600 in fiscal year 2011 to nearly 57,500 in fiscal year 2014.... This report examines (1) ORR’s response to the increase in unaccompanied children, (2) how ORR cares for children in its custody and monitors their care, (3) how ORR identifies and screens sponsors for children, and (4) what is known about services children receive after they leave ORR custody.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Vehicle Technology Survey. American Automobile Association. Feb. 23, 2016. 2 p.

<http://publicaffairsresources.aaa.biz/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Automotive-Engineering-ADAS-Survey-Fact-Sheet-FINAL-3.pdf>

“Autonomous vehicles, designed to travel from point A to point B with minimal input from a driver/passenger, are currently being tested on American roadways.... According to a new survey from AAA, three-quarters of U.S. drivers, particularly women and those ages 55 and older, would be afraid to ride in a self-driving car. Despite this fear, consumer demand for semi-autonomous vehicle technology is fairly strong with six-in-10 American drivers wanting at least one of the following on their next vehicle: automatic emergency braking, adaptive cruise control, self-parking technology or lane keep assist.”

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