



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

April 13, 2016

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

"In U.S., Concern About Crime Climbs to 15-Year High." By Alyssa Davis. *Gallup* (Apr. 6, 2016). 7 p.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/190475/americans-concern-crime-climbs-year-high.aspx>

"Americans' level of concern about crime and violence is at its highest point in 15 years. Fifty-three percent of U.S. adults say they personally worry 'a great deal' about crime and violence, an increase of 14 percentage points since 2014. This figure is the highest that Gallup has measured since 2001. Twenty-six percent of U.S. adults currently worry 'a fair amount' about crime and violence, while 22% worry 'only a little' or 'not at all.' In March 2001, 62% of those surveyed fit into the worry 'a great deal' category, but this decreased significantly to 49% a year later, and fell to a record low of 39% in 2014, with increased worry occurring in 2015 and 2016. Possible explanations include a 1.7% increase in violent

crime during the first half of 2015, heightened media coverage, and increased worry among those living in households earning less than \$30,000 per year.”

ECONOMY

Index of State Economic Momentum. Federal Funds Information for States. Mar. 2016. 6 p.
www.ffis.org/node/4017 (Available at the California State Library)

California ranked second highest overall in the latest quarterly Index report, behind Utah. The Index ranking is based on an average of the states’ recent numbers in three measures of economic strength: personal income growth, employment growth, and population growth, compared with the nation as a whole. California scored first in income growth, eighth in employment growth, and seventeenth in population growth for the latest quarter.

EDUCATION

Unmet Need for Preschool Services in California: Statewide and Local Analysis. By Jennifer Anthony, et al. American Institutes for Research. Mar. 2016. 31 p.
<http://www.earlyedgecalifornia.org/resources/resource-files/kindergarten-readiness/unmet-need-for-prek-brief.pdf>

“This policy brief examines the remaining unmet need for preschool in California, based on eligibility and enrollment rates in the State Preschool Program and other state- and federally subsidized early learning and development programs. It also identifies the areas of the state with the highest unmet need for quality preschool programs, and makes recommendations about where new State Preschool Program slots should be offered in order to maximize the benefits for children, families, and communities in California.” The authors identify five California counties with the greatest unmet need for preschool among 3 and 4 year-old children: Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, and San Diego.

EMPLOYMENT

Race to the Bottom: How Low-Road Subcontracting Affects Working Conditions in California’s Property Services Industry. By Sara Hinkley, et al. UC Berkeley Labor Center. Mar. 2016. 31 p.
<http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2016/Race-to-the-Bottom.pdf>

“[P]olicymakers are increasingly asking whether subcontracting has contributed to the problem of low-wage work.... Industry research and interviews with experts suggest that the property services industry is currently driven by a highly competitive race to the bottom that results in lower wages and inferior working conditions.... Low-wage workers and their families are often forced to rely on public assistance in order to make ends meet.... The total cost to the federal and California governments of this assistance averaged \$228 million per year between 2009 and 2014.... The public also bears the costs of lost tax revenue when workers are illegally classified as independent contractors, are paid in cash, or are paid less than their actual earnings.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

“Wastewater Disposal and Earthquake Swarm Activity at the Southern End of the Central Valley, California.” By T.H.W. Goebel, et al. *Geophysical Research Letters*, vol. 43 (Jan. 22, 2016) 47 p. (Available at the California State Library)

“We use seismicity analysis and hydrogeological models to examine the role of seismically active faults in inducing earthquakes. We analyze a potentially injection-induced earthquake swarm with three events above $M4$ near the White Wolf fault (WWF). The swarm deviates from classic main aftershock behavior, exhibiting uncharacteristically low Gutenberg-Richter b of 0.6, and systematic migration patterns. Some smaller events occurred southeast of the WWF in an area of several disposal wells, one of which became active just 5 months before the main swarm activity. Hydrogeological modeling revealed that wastewater disposal likely contributed to seismicity via localized pressure increase along a seismically active fault. Our results suggest that induced seismicity may remain undetected in California without detailed analysis of local geologic setting, seismicity, and fluid diffusion.”

Drinking Water: EPA Needs to Collect Information and Consistently Conduct Activities to Protect Underground Sources of Drinking Water. By J. Alfredo Gómez, et al. U.S. Government Accountability Office. GAO-16-281. Feb. 2016. 78 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/675439.pdf>

“This report examines the extent to which EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] has collected inspection and enforcement information and conducted oversight activities needed to assess that class II programs protect underground sources of drinking water. GAO [Governmental Accountability Office] reviewed federal and state laws and regulations and EPA guidance and analyzed a nongeneralizable sample of significant violations. GAO interviewed EPA and state officials from programs in a nongeneralizable sample of eight states selected based on shale oil and gas regions, among other factors.... GAO recommends that, among other things, EPA require programs to report well-specific inspections data, clarify guidance on enforcement data reporting, and analyze the resources needed to oversee programs. EPA generally agreed with GAO’s findings, but does not plan to require well-specific data and analyze needed resources.”

HEALTH

Balancing Demand and Supply for Veterans’ Health Care. By Carrie M. Farmer, et al. RAND. Feb. 2016. 24 p.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1165z4.html

“Congress enacted the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 [calling] for a series of independent assessments of the VA health care system across a broad array of topics related to the delivery of health care services to veterans in VA-owned and -operated facilities, as well as those under contract to VA. RAND conducted three of these assessments: Veteran demographics and health care needs (A), VA health care capabilities (B), and VA authorities and mechanisms for purchasing care (C). This report summarizes the findings of our assessments and includes recommendations from the reports for improving the match between veterans’ needs and VA’s capabilities, including VA’s ability to purchase necessary care from the private sector.”

The Corporate Practice of Medicine in a Changing Healthcare Environment. By Pamela Martin, et al. California Research Bureau. Apr. 2016. 37 p.

http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/16/CRB_CPM_Final.pdf

California law has historically prevented corporations from practicing medicine, which includes the employment of physicians. This long-standing ban on the corporate practice of medicine remains in effect, though the state has created a number of exceptions for certain types of organizations. This report explores the current state of the ban in California. It reviews the impact of the ban in a changing

healthcare landscape that now emphasizes integrated service delivery, and explores the types of conflicts of interest—in addition to employment—that physicians and other medical professionals face. The report builds upon the policy options the Research Bureau discussed in its original 2007 paper.

HUMAN SERVICES

The CalFresh Food Assistance Program. By Caroline Danielson, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. Mar. 2016. 2 p.

http://ppic.org/content/pubs/jtf/JTF_FoodStampJTF.pdf

This fact sheet provides an overview of CalFresh Food Assistance Program. "An average of 4.4 million Californians living in 2.1 million households received CalFresh benefits each month in fiscal year 2015. Each recipient received, on average, \$142 a month toward their household grocery bill. Overall, Californians received nearly \$7.53 billion, or 10.8% of the total national spending on SNAP benefits. California has a small state-funded program (\$80 million in fiscal year 2015) to assist non-citizen legal permanent residents who are ineligible for federal benefits.... Enrollment ranged from a low of 19.7% in San Luis Obispo County to a high of 58.8% in Tulare County."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Grade Inflation at American Colleges and Universities: Recent GPA Trends Nationwide, Four-Year Colleges & Universities. By Stuart Rojstaczer. GradeInflation.com. Updated Mar. 29, 2016.

<http://www.gradeinflation.com/>

"Analyzing 70 years of transcript records from more than 400 schools, the researchers found that the share of A grades has tripled, from just 15% of grades in 1940 to 45% in 2013. At private schools, A's account for nearly a majority of grades awarded. These findings raise questions not only about whether the United States has been watering down its educational standards—and hampering the ability of students to compete in the global marketplace in the process. They also lend credence to the perception that campuses leave their students coddled, pampered and unchallenged, awarding them trophies just for showing up." (*Washington Post*, Mar. 28, 2016).

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

The Gap: The Affordable Housing Gap Analysis 2016. By Andrew Aurand, et al. National Low Income Housing Coalition. Apr. 2016. 20 p.

<http://nlihc.org/research/gap-report>

"The Gap documents a shortage of 7.2 million affordable and available rental units for the nation's 10.4 million extremely low income renter households, those with income at or below 30% of their area median. Three-quarters of extremely low income renters are severely cost-burdened, spending more than half of their income on rent and utilities." California is one of the worst offenders, with only 21 affordable units for every 100 extremely low income households, compared to an average of 31 out of 100 for the nation as a whole.

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