



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

December 7, 2016

Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

52% all federal crime prosecutions are for immigration in FY2016

EDUCATION

Survey shows need for uniformity in community college readiness assessments

EMPLOYMENT

Tipped workers often face a large wage gap

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

19 states impacted by harmful algal blooms in 2016

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Rural America improved economically to pre-Recession levels
2013 tax hikes on wealthy did not hurt economy or the wealthy

HEALTH

Needle exchange programs do not fully prevent spread of HIV

HUMAN SERVICES

SSA's budget cuts decreased staff and increased backlogs

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Immigration Now 52 Percent of All Federal Criminal Prosecutions. TRAC, Syracuse University.
Nov. 28, 2016. 5 p.

<http://trac.syr.edu/tracreports/crim/446/>

“Immigration remains the major focus of federal criminal enforcement efforts. The latest available data show that criminal prosecutions for illegal entry, illegal re-entry, and similar immigration violations made up 52% of all federal prosecutions in FY [fiscal year] 2016. During the 12 months ending September 30, immigration prosecutions totaled 69,636.... This number compares with just 63,405 prosecutions for all other federal crimes—including drugs, weapons, fraud, and violations of the thousands of other criminal provisions that the federal government is responsible for enforcing. These comparisons are based on

case-by-case records obtained as a result of lengthy litigation brought by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) against the U.S. Department of Justice.”

EDUCATION

Determining College Readiness in California’s Community Colleges: A Survey Assessment and Placement Policies. By Olga Rodriguez, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. Nov. 2016. 32 p.

http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_1116ORR.pdf

“This study presents results from a survey of assessment and placement policies at California’s community colleges in 2014-15 to inform ongoing efforts and provide a baseline of current policies.... As it stands, the lack of uniformity in the assessment of college readiness results in differential access to transfer-level courses and may contribute to unequal access for underserved students. Additionally, English Learners may be especially disadvantaged by current policies, as they have fewer opportunities to prepare for the test and their placements are generally determined using fewer measures. These findings highlight the need for additional research examining the effect of assessment and placement policies on achievement gaps, which would require longitudinal student-level data, including detailed demographic and assessment records.”

EMPLOYMENT

Raise the Wage: Women Fare Better in States with Equal Treatment for Tipped Workers. National Women’s Law Center. Oct. 2016. 5 p.

<https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Tipped-Wage-10.17.pdf>

This report provides an overview of the wage gap for tipped workers, including a discussion of poverty rates for women of color in tipped occupations. “In eighteen states, tipped workers are entitled to a base wage of only \$2.13. That’s less than a third of the federal minimum wage, which stands at \$7.25 per hour—the logic is that gratuities will boost the workers’ pay up past that normal floor. But in eight states, including Alaska, California, and Washington, employers are required to pay workers the federal minimum wage regardless of the amount they get in tips. In those so-called ‘equal treatment’ states, women on average are paid 82 cents for every dollar their male counterparts make. That compares with a 22 cent wage gap in states that adhere to the federal tipped minimum wage of \$2.13.” (*Bloomberg*, Oct. 19, 2016).

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Cyanobacterial harmful algal blooms and U.S. Geological Survey science capabilities. By J.L. Graham, et al. U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report, No. 1174. Oct. 2016. 12 p.

<https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2016/1174/ofr20161174.pdf>

“Cyanobacterial harmful algal blooms (cyanoHABs) are increasingly a global concern. CyanoHABs can threaten human and aquatic ecosystem health; they can cause major economic damage. The toxins produced by some species of cyanobacteria (called cyanotoxins) cause acute and chronic illnesses in humans.... Economic damages related to cyanoHABs include the loss of recreational revenue, decreased property values, and increased drinking-water treatment costs. Nationwide, toxic cyanobacterial harmful algal blooms have been implicated in human and animal illness and death in at least 43 states. In August 2016, at least 19 states had public health advisories because of cyanoHABs.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Rural America at a Glance 2016 Edition. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Nov. 2016. 6 p.
<https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/eib162/eib-162.pdf>

“Unemployment continued to decline in rural areas in 2015, falling close to levels last seen before the Great Recession, as employment continued to grow. After declining for several years, rural population stabilized. Median annual earnings rose in rural areas and poverty fell markedly in 2015, as in urban areas; the rise in earnings occurred across most major industry sectors. Trends in poverty and median household income were similar across county economic types. While employment in recreation is associated with relatively low earnings, recreation counties overall had relatively high levels of household income and low levels of poverty in 2015.”

Taxing the Rich More: Preliminary Evidence from the 2013 Tax Increase. By Emmanuel Saez. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 22798. Nov. 3, 2016. 57 p.
<http://eml.berkeley.edu/~saez/saezNBERWP16TPE.pdf>

“Obama's 2013 tax increases [by allowing previous ‘Bush tax cuts’ to expire] for wealthy Americans neither slowed their income growth nor hurt the economy.... The top 1% of earners managed to increase their share of the nation's income at about the same pace after their taxes were raised as they had before.... That outcome suggests that wealthier Americans did not respond to the higher taxes by either working less or saving less, as many economists often say will happen.... [T]he new study uses recently released tax data from the IRS.... Other data points appear to support [this] conclusion: Employers added 5.8 million jobs in 2014 and 2015—the strongest two-year growth since the late 1990s.” (*Fox Business News*, Nov. 3, 2016).

HEALTH

“Trends in HIV Diagnoses, Risk Behaviors, and Prevention Among Persons Who Inject Drugs—United States.” By Cyprian Wejnert, et al. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 65 no. 47 (Dec. 2, 2016) 7 p.

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6547e1.htm?s_cid=mm6547e1_e

Map of U.S. counties: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/to-your-health/wp/2016/11/29/white-rural-drug-users-lack-needle-exchange-programs-to-prevent-hiv-infections>

“Although needle exchange programs have been politically controversial for decades, studies have demonstrated their public health benefits in dramatically reducing the rate of HIV transmission and risk of hepatitis infections among injection drug users without increasing the rate of illegal drug use. [This report] found that use of these programs has increased substantially during the past decade, but most people who inject drugs still don’t always use sterile needles. Sharing needles and syringes is a direct route of transmission for HIV and hepatitis B and C viruses.... CDC researchers have identified 220 counties most vulnerable to an outbreak of HIV or hepatitis C by analyzing factors including overdose deaths, pharmacy sales of prescription painkillers and unemployment and poverty rates. At an infectious disease conference in New Orleans in October, CDC researchers presented a U.S. map showing those vulnerable counties and the locations of syringe service programs.” (*Washington Post*, Nov. 29, 2016).

HUMAN SERVICES

Social Security Administration Cuts Hurt Every State. By Kathleen Romig. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Sep. 12, 2016. 12 p.

<http://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/9-12-16socsec.pdf>

Social Security Administration (SSA)'s core operating budget has been cut by 10% since 2010. These cuts have had an impact on SSA's service to the public, such as fewer staff to process applications for disability benefits. The SSA and the Disability Determination Service's staff levels have shrunk 6% and 14% nationwide, and 6% and 10% in California. Staff shortages have contributed to a record-high disability hearing backlog of over 1 million applicants nationwide. In California, backlogs have increased by 63% since 2010, and the average processing time for an appeal is over 18 months in 2016.

About the California Research Bureau

The California Research Bureau at the California State Library develops independent, nonpartisan research and analysis for the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and Constitutional Offices. We provide policy research, 50-state reviews, academic and media summaries, data analysis and much more. To learn more about us or to make a request, or to subscribe to *Studies in the News*, contact crb@library.ca.gov or call (916) 319-2691.

Studies in the News archived issues and RSS feed are available at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb/>.