



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

April 4, 2018

The California Research Bureau recently released [A Review of the California Unlawful Detainer Pilot Program: 2018 Update](#), which is a statutorily required report evaluating the merits of the 20-year-old program. The program authorizes city attorneys in select jurisdictions to evict tenants arrested for drug- and weapon-related incidents.

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Two reports indicate SNAP is effective, but not sufficient

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Work and Opportunity Before and After Incarceration. By Adam Looney, et al. Brookings Institution. Mar. 2018. 27 p.

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/work-and-opportunity-before-and-after-incarceration/>

This report uses IRS data to study links between labor market outcomes and economic characteristics of the incarcerated population.... “In Los Angeles ... the incarceration rate at age 30 of children growing up in neighborhoods in Westwood, Santa Monica, or Sierra Madre was essentially zero, whereas in neighborhoods in south LA or Compton the rate (of men and women combined) was close to 7%.... About one third of all 30-year-old men who aren’t working are either in prison, in jail, or are unemployed ex-prisoners. Almost half of ex-prisoners have no reported earnings in the first several years after leaving prison; among those who do find work, half earn less than \$10,090 a year.” The report suggests that policy interventions aimed at improving the lives of poor children and less-skilled adults may also improve work opportunities for ex-prisoners.

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Opportunity Imbalance: Race, Gender, and California’s Education-to-Employment Pipeline. California Competes. Feb. 21, 2018. 18 p.

<http://californiacompetes.org/publications/opportunity-imbalance>

“While California’s economy rapidly adds higher-paying jobs, millions of Californians fail to qualify for these opportunities because they lack the required credential or degree.... [M]any employers look out of state and overseas for the right talent.... Identifying inequities in the education-to-employment pipeline is critical to effectively closing [this] gap.” Key findings include steady improvement in high school graduation rate but not college completion, and better outcomes in urban regions. These findings vary by ethnicity (for example, Latinos earn the lowest median wages, but show greatest improvements in education) and gender (women fare better educationally, but not in employment). A statewide, comprehensive education data system and a statewide higher education coordinating entity are recommended.

ECONOMY

“Climate Change Trends and Impacts on California Agriculture: A Detailed Review.” By T.B. Pathak, et al. *Agronomy*, vol. 8 no. 25 (Feb. 2018) 27 p.

www.mdpi.com/2073-4395/8/3/25/pdf

“California currently provides two-thirds of the country’s fruits and nuts, but according to a new study published Tuesday, by the end of the century California’s climate will no longer be able to support the state’s major crops, including orchards. The report ... warns that the increased rate and scale of climate change is ‘beyond the realm of experience’ for the agricultural community, and unless farmers take urgent measures, the consequences could threaten national food security.” ([KQED](#), Feb. 27, 2018).

EDUCATION

Bias in Online Classes: Evidence from a Field Experiment. By Rachel Baker, et al. Stanford Center for Policy Analysis. Mar. 2018. 46 p.

<https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/wp18-03-201803.pdf>

“While online learning environments are increasingly common, relatively little is known about issues of equity in these settings. We test for the presence of race and gender biases among postsecondary students and instructors in online classes by measuring student and instructor responses to discussion comments we posted in the discussion forums of 124 different online courses. Each comment was randomly assigned a student name connoting a specific race and gender. We find that instructors are 94% more likely to respond to forum posts by White male students. In contrast, we do not find general evidence of biases in student responses. However, we do find that comments placed by White females are more likely to receive a response from White female peers. We discuss the implications of our findings for our understanding of social identity dynamics in classrooms and the design of equitable online learning environments.”

States Leading for Equity: Promising Practices Advancing the Equity Commitments. Council of Chief State School Officers and Aspen Institute Education & Society. Feb. 2018. 22 p.

<http://www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/States%20Leading%20for%20Equity%20Online.pdf>

“This document provides a brief overview of practices and policies states are currently engaging in to provide a stronger education for students. The purpose of this document is not to advocate for one approach over another or to suggest that the work toward educational equity is complete. Rather, this document shows positive examples of state action toward each of the ten equity commitments as a milestone on this journey to share the progress states have made and recognize the difficult work remaining. Our state chiefs know that the journey towards equity is just beginning and this document marks a celebration of positive starts along that path.” In this report, California’s English Learner Roadmap and Local Control Funding Formula are highlighted as examples of “promising practices.”

EMPLOYMENT

Women Can’t Win. By Anthony B. Carnevale, et al. Georgetown University. 2018. 20 p.

https://cew-7632.kxcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/Women_ES_Web.pdf

“Linking programs of study to workforce outcomes is especially important for women who face a persistent wage gap that endures and broadens with time and experience on the job. In most instances, incurring debt to go to college is a smart bet, if done wisely. The loans that cannot be repaid are the ones that cripple. Today, when many girls and women can expect to be the primary provider or co-providers for themselves and their families, the development of knowledge and skills is their smartest investment. In today’s complicated higher education system, there is a dearth of information about which courses of study, certificates, and classes lead to middle-class incomes—and overwhelmingly, the majors with the lowest post-graduation earnings potential are dominated by women.” (*Stateline*, Mar. 14, 2018).

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

“Exploring the Origins of Snow Drought in the Northern Sierra Nevada, California.” By Benjamin J. Hatchett, et al. *Earth Interactions*, vol. 22 (Feb. 22, 2018) pp. 1-13.

<https://journals.ametsoc.org/doi/pdf/10.1175/EI-D-17-0027.1>

“The concept of snow drought is gaining widespread interest as the climate of snow-dominated mountain watersheds continues to change.... Using ... simple definitions (of warm snow drought and dry snow drought) and a variety of observations at monthly, daily, and hourly time scales, the authors explore the

hydrometeorological origins of potential snow droughts in the northern Sierra Nevada from water years 1951 to 2017.... These findings can guide improved evaluations of historical and potential future snow droughts, particularly with regards to how impacts on water resources and mountain ecosystems may vary depending on how snow droughts originate and evolve in time.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Counting for Dollars 2020: The Role of the Decennial Census in the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds – Report #2: Estimating Fiscal Costs of a Census Undercount to States. By Andrew Reamer. George Washington University Institute of Public Policy. Mar. 19, 2018. 18 p.

<https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/GWIPP%20Reamer%20Fiscal%20Impacts%20of%20Census%20Undercount%20on%20FMAP-based%20Programs%2003-19-18.pdf>

“According to a recent report ... about 300 federal programs allocate over \$800 billion a year based on Census counts. Researchers further estimated the effects of an undercount on five programs administered by the Department of Health and Human Services that accounted for nearly half of all federal grants to states. They found that 37 states lost a median of \$1,091 in fiscal 2015 for each person missed in the 2010 Census.” However, the report showed that a census undercount in California would have zero effect on those five grant programs in the state because California is already reimbursed at the minimum federal level. ([Governing](#), Mar. 28, 2018).

HEALTH

“What is the US Health Spending Problem?” By David Cutler. *Health Affairs*, vol. 37 no. 3 (Feb. 14, 2018) 5 p.

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2017.1626>

“Is increased spending on medical care harmful to the US economy? The overall share of the gross domestic product spent on medical care is not a problem, provided that the services bought are worth more than their cost. However, high and rising costs expose two often-overlooked problems. First, spending is too high because many dollars are wasted. Estimates suggest that unnecessary medical spending costs the typical American family thousands of dollars each year. Second, high medical costs combined with stagnant incomes for a large share of the population and the inability of governments at all levels to raise tax dollars leads to increased health and economic disparities: fewer people covered by private insurance, the rationing of care in public health programs, and the lack of funds for other social programs. These distribution issues, coupled with the large waste, imply that efforts to address medical spending need to be among our highest priorities.”

HUMAN SERVICES

The Antipoverty Effects of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. By Laura Wheaton, et al. Urban Institute. Feb. 2018. 52 p.

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/96521/the_antipoverty_effects_of_the_supplemental_nutrition_assistance_program_2.pdf

“Previous studies have highlighted the importance of SNAP’s [The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] antipoverty effects. However, the antipoverty effects of SNAP are often understated” This report augmented the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) by using data that have been corrected for underreporting of SNAP. “SNAP reduced SPM poverty an estimated 17% in 2015 and filled 21% of the poverty gap. The effects were particularly pronounced for children. SNAP reduced child poverty 28%, reduced the number of children in deep poverty by nearly half, and shrank the poverty gap among families with children by more than one-third.”

How Far Do SNAP Benefits Fall Short of Covering the Cost of a Meal? By Elaine Waxman, et al. Urban Institute. Feb. 2018. 15 p.

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/96661/how_far_do_snap_benefits_fall_short_of_covering_the_cost_of_a_meal_2.pdf

“The average cost of a meal across the continental US and DC is \$2.36, 27 percent higher than the maximum SNAP benefit per meal of \$1.86. The maximum SNAP benefit does not cover the cost of a meal in 99% of US continental counties and DC. For families with no net income, the SNAP benefit is not sufficient to fully cover the cost of a minimally adequate diet in 3,086 of the total 3,108 counties.”

About the California Research Bureau

The California Research Bureau at the California State Library develops independent, nonpartisan research and analysis for the executive and legislative branches. We provide policy research, 50-state reviews, academic and media summaries, data analysis and much more. To learn more about us, contact crb@library.ca.gov, or call (916) 319-2691.

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