



## Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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North From Mexico: The Spanish-speaking People of the United States

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT**

***The Criminalization of Poverty: How to Break the Cycle through Policy Reform in Maryland.***

**By Lavanya Madhusudan. Job Opportunities Task Force. Jan. 2018. 104 p.**

[http://www.jotf.org/Portals/0/jotf/publications/COP%20report%20013018\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.jotf.org/Portals/0/jotf/publications/COP%20report%20013018_FINAL.pdf)

To address concern around the impact of incarceration on Maryland's working families, this report was written "to identify whether there are key laws, policies and practices in Maryland that are either unnecessarily penalizing the poor or leading the poor to be unnecessarily arrested, charged with a crime or imprisoned because they are poor and therefore unable to satisfy the demands of the law.... The

report outlines how law enforcement's racial profiling and civil asset forfeiture polices, motor vehicle and insurance industry practices, and the cash bail and court debt systems all combine to make it extremely difficult to avoid the criminal justice system when you are poor. The report also highlights effects of this criminalization on a person's access to employment, education, and public assistance."

## ECONOMY

***Measuring the Digital Economy.* By Marshall Reinsdorf, et al. IMF. Sep. 2017. 48 p.**

<http://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/04/03/022818-measuring-the-digital-economy>

"The lack of a generally agreed definition of the 'digital economy' or 'digital sector' and the lack of industry and product classification for Internet platforms and associated services are hurdles to measuring the digital economy. ... Available evidence suggests that the digital sector is still less than 10 percent of most economies if measured by valued added, income or employment. ... GDP is a measure of market- and near-market production valued at market prices, and, as such, is well-suited to address key policy questions. However, some free services enabled by digital products represent quality improvements that could be captured in real consumption by quality-adjusting the deflator. Also, research on expanding the measure of investment to include collection of data may imply a modification of the GDP production boundary.... Indicators of welfare from free digital products can, and should, be developed in the context of measurement of nonmarket production outside the boundary of GDP."

***Measuring the "Free" Digital Economy within the GDP and Productivity Accounts.* By Leonard Nakamura, et al. Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence. Sep. 2017. 72 p.**

<https://www.escoe.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/ESCoE-DP-2017-03.pdf>

"The digital economy provides a number of [free] services ... like Candy Crush, email, web searches, access to information and entertainment, and many more. Because users are not paying an additional price for using these services, this form of economic output doesn't seem to be captured by conventional economic statistics ... [the authors] propose that the economic value of 'free' content can be measured by the marketing and advertising revenue that it generates. In other words, you 'pay' for 'free' content not with money, but by selling a slice of your attention to advertising. Thus, their approach is a practical application of the saying: 'If you're not paying for it, you're the product.'" ([Conversable Economist](#), Jan. 10, 2018)

## EDUCATION

***Still Hungry and Homeless in College.* By Sara Goldrick-Rab, et al. Wisconsin HOPE Lab. Apr. 2018. 52 p.**

<http://wihopelab.com/publications/Wisconsin-HOPE-Lab-Still-Hungry-and-Homeless.pdf>

"As college students grapple with the rising costs of classes ... and books, mortgaging their futures with student loans in exchange for a diploma they're gambling will someday pay off, it turns out many of them are in great financial peril in the present, too. More than a third of college students don't always have enough to eat and they lack stable housing, according to a survey published Tuesday by researchers at Temple University and the Wisconsin HOPE Lab. Overall, the study concluded 36% of college students say they are food insecure. Another 36% say they are housing insecure, while 9% report being homeless. The results are largely the same as last year's survey, which included fewer students." ([National Public Radio](#), Apr. 3, 2018).

## EMPLOYMENT

**California Hiring Tax Credits.** By Brian Weatherford. Legislative Analyst's Office. Mar. 2018. 8 p.  
<http://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/3784>

"The 2018-19 proposed budget includes a new tax credit—the California Hiring Credit—that would be similar to [an] existing credit but with several changes that should make it more attractive to employers.... [W]e believe an even more fundamental restructuring is necessary. We suggest increasing the amount of the tax credit at lower wages by either (1) calculating the credit amount on total wages (up to a specified ceiling), or (2) setting the credit at a flat per hour dollar amount. We also suggest allowing all California businesses to claim the credit if they hire qualified workers and eliminating a restriction against part-time employment."

## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

**"Volatile Chemical Products Emerging as Largest Petrochemical Source of Urban Organic Emissions."** By Brian C. McDonald, et al. *Science*, vol. 359, issue 6377 (Feb. 16, 2018) pp. 760-764. (Report available from the California Research Bureau)

"A gap in emission inventories of volatile organic compound (VOC) sources, which contribute to regional ozone and aerosol burdens, has increased as transportation emissions in the United States and Europe have declined rapidly. A detailed mass balance demonstrates that the use of volatile chemical products (VCPs)—including pesticides, coatings, printing inks, adhesives, cleaning agents, and personal care products—now constitutes half of fossil fuel VOC emissions in industrialized cities.... We show that human exposure to carbonaceous aerosols of fossil origin is transitioning away from transportation-related sources and toward VCPs. Existing U.S. regulations on VCPs emphasize mitigating ozone and air toxics, but they currently exempt many chemicals that lead to secondary organic aerosols." Los Angeles is used as a case study for this report.

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Assessing California's Redistricting Commission: Effects on Partisan Fairness and Competitiveness.** By Eric McGhee. Public Policy Institute of California. Mar. 2018. 22 p.  
<http://www.ppic.org/publication/assessing-californias-redistricting-commission-effects-on-partisan-fairness-and-competitiveness/>

"A new mathematical analysis of the 2011 maps ... contrast[s] them with the last redistricting by the Legislature in 2001. 'This evaluation of the California Redistricting Commission maps suggests that the CRC plans have been more favorable to Democrats, on average, than the plans drawn by the California Legislature in 2001.... However, much of the difference appears to be driven by outlier elections.'... Some Republicans say [the CRC purposefully granted a Democratic advantage], but the McGhee study, the historic record on redistricting and [Dan Walter's] observation of the CRC's incredibly lengthy meetings ... say otherwise. As McGhee accurately notes, the 2001 maps were a bipartisan gerrymander, aimed at preserving the numerical status quo in the Legislature and the state's congressional delegation." ([CALmatters](#), Mar. 6, 2018).

## HEALTH

**“E-cigarette Smoke Damages DNA and Reduces Repair Activity in Mouse Lung, Heart, and Bladder as well as in Human Lung and bladder Cells.”** By Hyun-Wook Lee, et al. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 115 no. 7 (Feb. 2018) 10 p.

<http://www.pnas.org/content/115/7/E1560>

“E-cigarette smoke (ECS) delivers nicotine through aerosols without burning tobacco. ECS is promoted as noncarcinogenic. We found that ECS induces DNA damage in mouse lung, bladder, and heart and reduces DNA-repair functions and proteins in lung. Nicotine and its nitrosation product 4-(methylnitrosamine)-1-(3-pyridyl)-1-butanone can cause the same effects as ECS and enhance mutations and tumorigenic cell transformation in cultured human lung and bladder cells. These results indicate that nicotine nitrosation occurs in the lung, bladder, and heart, and that its products are further metabolized into DNA damaging agents. We propose that ECS, through damaging DNA and inhibiting DNA repair, might contribute to human lung and bladder cancer as well as to heart disease, although further studies are required to substantiate this proposal.”

## HUMAN SERVICES

***Safety Net Investments in Children.*** By Hilary W. Hoynes, et al. Brookings. Mar. 2018. 67 p.

[https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2\\_hoynesschanz1.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2_hoynesschanz1.pdf)

“We examine what groups of children are served by core childhood social safety net programs—including Medicaid, EITC, CTC, SNAP, and AFDC/TANF—and how they have changed over time. We find that virtually all gains in spending on the social safety net for children since 1990 have gone to families with earnings, and to families with income above the poverty line. These trends are the result of welfare reform and the expansion of in-work tax credits. We review the available research and find that access to safety net programs during childhood improves outcomes for children and society over the long run. This evidence suggests that the recent changes to the social safety net may have lasting negative impacts on the poorest children.”

## RECOMMENDED READING

**McWilliams, Carey (1905-1980). *North from Mexico: The Spanish-speaking People of the United States.*** New York: Greenwood Press, 1968 [c1948] 324 p.

Available at the California State Library

McWilliams' favorite among his books is "North from Mexico." Though it may be less well-known than the others, it is probably the most prescient of all his works. Written three decades ago, it accurately predicted the pattern of persistent Mexican immigration, legal and illegal, that today has created a nation within a nation in the American Southwest.

"French culture is indigenous in Quebec in much the same sense that Spanish culture is indigenous in New Mexico," McWilliams wrote at a time when there was no separatist movement in Quebec. "There is a time factor and a space factor involved in both situations which is not to be found in the usual European immigrant 'problem' in America."

McWilliams would have seen the growing Mexican immigration that alarms so many Anglos in the southwest as an opportunity rather than a threat. "The Mexican immigration is to the advantage of the United States," he said [in an interview]. "Mexico is a frontier country in terms of our relations with all the rest of Central and South America, and the immigration will help us to come to terms with it." ([Washington Post](#), Jan. 28, 1979).

### ***About the California Research Bureau***

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