



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Penalty Assessment Funds - California's Traffic Penalties and Fees Provide Inconsistent Funding for State and County Programs and Have a Significant Financial Impact on Drivers. California State Auditor. Apr. 2018. 37 p.

<https://www.bsa.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2017-126.pdf>

"Traffic infractions that carry a base fine of \$35 can cost an individual \$237 after penalties and fees are included.... According to the Legislature, these penalties are [also] regressive in that they are particularly

harmful to individuals who can least afford to pay high fines. Further, the revenue collected from penalties and fees is trending downward, creating challenges for many of the programs that rely on this revenue to provide services. For example, penalty and fee revenues for state funds have decreased by 14% to 25% over the last three years as the number of criminal cases filed has decreased and as more fines, penalties, and fees have gone unpaid.”

ECONOMY

***The Role of Transportation Speed in Facilitating High Skilled Teamwork.* By Xiaofang Dong, et al. Publisher. Apr. 2018. 43 p.**
<http://www.nber.org/papers/w24539> [Available to .gov accounts or from the California Research Bureau]

Can the use of high-speed rail encourage collaboration and productivity and diminish regional inequalities? “[S]econdary cities in China become more productive and their partnerships with star scientists in mega cities yield a greater quantity and quality of research as cross-city travel time declines. This flattening of the hierarchy of human capital distribution in Chinese cities helps to promote both economic growth and reduces within region human capital inequality.”

EDUCATION

***College Completion through a Latino Lens.* By Deborah Santiago, et al. Excelencia in Education. Apr. 2018. 4 p.**
<https://www.edexcelencia.org/research/issue-briefs/college-completion-through-latino-lens> (Free registration required)

“In this brief *Excelencia* analyzed Latino students’ persistence and completion in college, mapped pathways to completion, and identified evidence-based practices that will help institutions and policymakers increase Latino college completion. This analysis is based on a report by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC) tracking college students over six years and examines their outcomes by race/ethnicity, institutional type, and enrollment intensity.... Most Latinos persist through college with a mix of full-time and part-time enrollment status.... Almost half of Latinos complete a degree in six years.... Latinos are more likely than their peers to still be enrolled beyond six years on their path to a degree.”

***The Prevalence of Collaboration Among America’s Teachers: National Findings from the American Teacher Panel.* By William R. Johnson, et al. RAND. 2018. 20 p.**
https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2217.html

Peer collaboration among teachers is “an important component of teachers’ long-term career development and capacity to support student learning.” However, researchers found that American teachers do not make enough use of this practice: “1) Only 31% of teachers reported that they have sufficient time to collaborate with other teachers” and 2) 44% of teachers “never observed another teacher’s classroom to get ideas for instruction or to offer feedback.... A major obstacle to increased collaboration appears to be time constraints.... If more support and time were given to organized collaborative structures, such as teacher teams or professional learning communities, teacher collaboration could become a much more universal part of the profession.”

EMPLOYMENT

The Automation Readiness Index: Who Is Ready for the Coming Wave of Automation?

The Economist Intelligence Unit. Jan. 2018. 33 p.

<http://www.automationreadiness.eiu.com/static/download/PDF.pdf>

“The Automation Readiness Index compares countries on their preparedness for the age of intelligent automation. In assessing the existence of policy and strategy in the areas of innovation, education and the labour market, the study finds that little policy is in place today that specifically addresses the challenges of AI- and robotics-based automation. No country has yet to ‘take the bull by horns’, in the view of several experts interviewed for the study. A small handful, however, including South Korea, Germany and Singapore—the overall index leaders—have undertaken individual initiatives in areas such as curriculum reform, lifelong learning, occupational training and workplace flexibility.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

The Haywire Earthquake Scenario: We Can Outsmart Disaster. By Kenneth W. Hudnut, et al.

U.S. Geological Survey. Fact Sheet 2018-3016. Apr. 2018. 6 p.

<https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/fs20183016>

“Up to 800 people could die and 400 fires could ignite if the Hayward Fault were to rupture.... The study ... imagined a magnitude 7.0 tremor along the 52-mile fault line that stretches from San Pablo Bay in the north, to just east of San Jose in the south. It would cause rippling calamities. Eighteen thousand people could be injured. The fires could engulf—and potentially consume—some 50,000 homes. Two thousand could be trapped in fallen buildings, and 22,000 could be stuck in broken elevators. East Bay residents might spend up to six months without water in the hardest-hit areas. The prospect, in fact, is quite realistic.” ([SF Gate](#), Apr. 18, 2018).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

The Administration’s Proposition 55 Estimates. By Ann Hollingshead. Legislative Analyst’s Office. Mar. 1, 2018. 12 p.

<http://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/3765>

“Proposition 55 (2016) extended tax rate increases on high-income earners from 2018 until 2030.... These revenues increase required spending on schools and community colleges [and] aimed to increase funding for Medi-Cal ... through a formula administered by the Department of Finance (DOF).” However, the DOF interpretation of workload budget and accounting of the optional deposit into the Budget Stabilization Account resulted in no additional funding for Medi-Cal in 2018-19. The LAO concludes that the DOF has significant discretion in interpreting the funding formula, and this year’s calculations (the first year for Proposition 55) set a precedent for future implementation.

HEALTH

“Low-level Lead Exposure and Mortality in US Adults: a Population-based Cohort Study.”

By Bruce Lanphear, et al. *The Lancet*, vol. 3 no. 4 (Apr. 2018). 8 p.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(18\)30025-2/references](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(18)30025-2/references)

“[O]ur study findings suggest that low-level environmental lead exposure is an important risk factor for death in the USA, particularly from cardiovascular disease. It is not surprising that lead exposure is

overlooked; it is ubiquitous, but insidious and largely beyond the control of patients and clinicians. Although reducing the amount of lead in blood might cut a patient's risk of cardiovascular disease mortality, it is more accurate to view this study as estimating how many deaths might have been prevented if historical exposures to lead had not occurred. Indeed, this study suggests that estimating the contribution of environmental lead exposure is essential to understand trends in cardiovascular disease mortality and develop comprehensive strategies to prevent cardiovascular disease.”

HUMAN SERVICES

***SNAP Boosts Retailers and Local Economies.* By Elizabeth Wolkomir. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Apr. 6, 2018. 17 p.**

<https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/8-29-17fa.pdf>

“The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, previously food stamps) is an important public-private partnership that helps families afford a basic diet, generates business for retailers, and boosts local economies. SNAP accounts for about 10% of the food that U.S. families buy for their homes. Participants purchase groceries with SNAP benefits at about 260,000 retailers—from superstores to farmers’ markets—across the country.” The number of California’s SNAP retailers (25,354) is the highest in the nation, followed by Texas (20,080) and New York (18,037). “By increasing low-income households’ purchasing power so they can buy the food they need directly from stores, SNAP integrates economically marginalized households with almost no government administrative overhead resulting from food distribution.”

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

***Artificial Intelligence: Emerging Opportunities, Challenges, and Implications.* Comptroller General of the United States. Government Accountability Office. Mar. 2018. 100 p.**

<https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-142SP>

How can artificial intelligence help defend against power grid cyberattacks, or automate facial recognition as part of criminal investigations? Participants at a recent Comptroller General forum discussed “a range of opportunities and challenges related to artificial intelligence, as well as areas needed for future research and for consideration by policymakers.” Forum participants discussed ways policymakers can incentivize the sharing of high-quality data, improve safety and security, update the regulatory approach, and understand the implications of artificial intelligence on education and training for the jobs of the future.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***Special Report: California’s Surface Transportation: Roads, Bridges & High Speed Rail.* The California Institute for Federal Policy Research. May 3, 2018. 4 p.**

<http://www.calinst.org/pubs/SpecialReportTransportationInfrastructure.pdf>

This four-page brief provides a broad “overview of the current state of California’s surface transportation systems, and funding levels for these systems, including roads, bridges, and California’s High Speed Rail.” It includes the latest road usage statistics and estimated costs for infrastructure repair.

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