

Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Bureau of Prisons: Growing Inmate Crowding Negatively Affects Inmates, Staff, and Infrastructure. U.S. Government Accountability Office. Sep. 2012. 92 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/650/648123.pdf>

“According to BOP [Bureau of Prisons], the growth in the federal inmate population has negatively affected inmates, staff, and infrastructure, but BOP has acted within its authority to help mitigate the effects of this growth. BOP officials reported increased use of double and triple bunking, waiting lists for education and drug treatment programs, limited meaningful work opportunities, and increased inmate-to-staff ratios. These factors, taken together, contribute to increased inmate misconduct, which negatively affects the safety and security of inmates and staff. BOP officials and union representatives voiced concerns about a serious incident occurring.”

***Juvenile Justice Realignment: Limited Information Prevents a Meaningful Assessment of Realignment Effectiveness.* California State Auditor. Sep. 2012. 96 p.**

<http://www.bsa.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2011-129.pdf>

“[L]imited information and a lack of clear goals prevent a meaningful assessment of the outcomes of juvenile justice realignment. In particular ... the Board of State and Community Corrections (board) is required to issue annual reports regarding counties’ use of block grant funds.... [W]e would expect the reports to allow the Legislature to make assessments regarding the outcomes of realignment. However, the board’s reports are based on a flawed methodology and, therefore, should not be used for this purpose ... [and] could mislead decision makers about the effectiveness of realignment by making it appear that realignment has not been effective when this may not be the case.”

ECONOMY

***Loaded with Uncertainty: Are Prepaid Cards a Smart Alternative to Checking Accounts?* By Cora Hume, et al. The Pew Charitable Trusts. Sep. 2012. 39 p.**

http://www.pewstates.org/uploadedFiles/PCS_Assets/2012/Pew_prepaid_report.pdf

“General purpose reloadable prepaid cards are rapidly growing in popularity ... [and are] a risky, largely unregulated alternative to the traditional checking account.... This study reviews 52 prepaid cards that comprised at least 75% of the market in 2011. It finds that: the varying fee structures and disclosures for prepaid cards make comparison shopping very difficult ... and disclosures are not uniform; ... and that these products are not covered by laws requiring disclosures of fees and terms – nor those that limit consumer liability for unauthorized electronic fund transfers.”

EDUCATION

***Is Retaining Students in the Early Grades Self-Defeating?* By Martin R. West. The Brookings Institution. Aug. 16, 2012. 7 p.**

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2012/8/16%20student%20retention%20west/16%20student%20retention%20west>

“Policies encouraging the retention of students who have not acquired basic reading skills by third grade are no substitute for the development of a comprehensive strategy to reduce the number of struggling readers.... [P]olicies that include appropriate interventions for retained students may well be a useful component of a comprehensive strategy. There is nothing in the research literature proving that such a practice would be harmful to the students who are directly affected, and some evidence to suggest that those students may benefit. Test-based promotion policies may also create new incentives for educators and parents to improve student reading skills prior to third grade.”

***Understanding School Discipline in California: Perceptions and Practice.* By Louis Freeberg, et al. EdSource. Sep. 10, 2012. 45 p.**

http://www.edsource.org/assets/files/publications/Edsource_Student_Discipline_Survey_Sept_2012.pdf

An “overwhelming 81% of administrators ranked student discipline and behavior management as a concern when compared to other issues facing districts, although just 22% said it was a major concern. They worry about the disproportionate number of expulsions and suspensions of Latino and African American students, about not having discretion when it comes to the state’s zero tolerance policies, and about the financial burden of student discipline on the schools in staff time, legal fees, and security measures.” Additionally, “nearly half the districts surveyed reported implementing some strategies to keep students who misbehave in school and to try to prevent the problem behavior in the first place.” (EdSource, Sep.10, 2012).

EMPLOYMENT

Declines in Unemployment Benefits and Government Employment Shaped Poverty Trends in 2011, Preliminary Data Suggest. By Arloc Sherman, et al. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Sep. 7, 2012. 4 p.

<http://www.cbpp.org/files/9-7-12pov.pdf>

“A preliminary analysis of Census data for the first 11 months of 2011 (which are the latest data now available) indicates that the average share of people with monthly cash income below the official poverty line rose in 2011 by about half a percentage point. The combination of a decline in unemployment insurance (UI) benefits and a loss of public-sector earnings accounted fully for this increase in monthly poverty, according to the analysis.” Nine hundred thousand people dropped below the poverty line after receiving decreased UI benefits in 2011. “Another 666,000 people lost significant family earnings from state and local government work in 2011 and became poor as a result.”

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Recovery Plan for the Evolutionarily Significant Unit of Central California Coast Coho Salmon. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. 2012.

Executive Summary, 24 p.:

http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/recovery/Final%20CCC%20Coho%20Recovery%20plan/CCC%20Coho%20Salmon%20ESU%20Executive%20Summary_Sept%202012.pdf

Full Report, 3 vols.: <http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/recovery/Coho.htm>

“More than 2,000 pages and three volumes, a federal plan to rescue the endangered Central Coast coho salmon from the brink of oblivion is laid out in staggering specificity. Once found in more than a dozen rivers between San Francisco and Aptos, coho are now found in two: Scott Creek and San Vicente Creek. The population ran into the hundreds of thousands during the 1940s; it is now listed as an endangered species. The highly detailed recovery plan includes scores of recommendations and a detailed analysis of specific rivers. It covers proposed legislative and regulatory changes, pollution control practices, road and sewer management, monitoring and much more.” (*San Jose Mercury News*, Sep. 6, 2012).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Test-driving California's Election Reforms. By Eric McGhee, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. Sep. 2012. 7 p.

http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_quick.asp?i=1032

“In the June 2012 primary, California tested two important electoral changes: new legislative and congressional districts drawn by an independent citizens commission and a ‘top two’ primary system. The results suggest the reforms produced some changes – in particular, more open seats and more competition. However, there was also a great deal of continuity with recent elections: most candidates endorsed by a major party and all incumbents are advancing to the fall election.... Over time, the reforms may produce more radical change, but the first step on the road of reform has been a small one.”

HEALTH

Best Care at Lower Cost: The Path to Continuously Learning Health Care in America. By Mark Smith, et al. Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Sep. 7, 2012. 450 p.

Free download at: http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13444

Issue Brief, 4 p.: <http://iom.edu/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2012/Best-Care/BestCareReportBrief.pdf>

A new report from the Institute of Medicine outlines roughly \$750 billion in unnecessary health care service delivery in 2009. "Inefficiencies, an overwhelming amount of data, and other economic and quality barriers hinder progress in improving health and threaten the nation's economic stability and global competitiveness.... However, the knowledge and tools exist to put the health system on the right course to achieve continuous improvement and better quality care at lower cost."

HOUSING

What Happens to Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Properties at Year 15 and Beyond? By Jill Khadduri, et al. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Aug. 2012. 180 p.

http://www.huduser.org/publications/pdf/what_happens_lihtc.pdf

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program provides a major source of the housing stock for the U.S. Housing and Urban Development's affordable housing program. Because many properties in the coming years will encounter a 15-year restriction on their eligibility for the program, the affordable housing stock could drop dramatically. However, a majority of the properties studied maintained affordability after Year 15. Some are owned by non-profit organizations committed to affordable housing, some must follow state affordability mandates, and some properties stayed affordable because the restricted rents for LIHTC units were the same as market rents.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Intellectual Property Creates Jobs for America. Global Intellectual Property Center. 2012.

<http://www.theglobalipcenter.com/ipcreatesjobs>

"The role of intellectual property, a key ingredient in catalyzing the knowledge economy, continues to grow. The Global Intellectual Property Center, an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, published a breakdown of the impact of intellectual property-intensive companies on individual states. The report showed ... 55 million jobs, supported by IP-intensive industries, make up 46% of private sector employment; a total of \$5.8 trillion output by IP-intensive industries; 30% higher wages than the national average supplied by these companies; and 74% of exports, which amounts to nearly \$1 trillion. The site provides a state-by-state breakdown and factsheet." (The Council of State Governments Knowledge Center, Sep. 5, 2012).

About *Studies in the News*

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