



Studies in the News

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Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Additional reforms to CA prison population may increase safety

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Retirement security affected by marriage, work trends

ECONOMY

Sustained growth forecast for CA and southern CA economies

EDUCATION

CTE dual enrollment positive benefits

EMPLOYMENT

Increased minimum wage: job loss weighed against worker benefits

ENERGY

60 years of hydraulic fracturing in CA

ENVIRONMENT

Role of timber harvest in controlling bark beetle outbreaks

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Fiscal planning tools for long-term state budgeting

HEALTH

Rogue Internet pharmacies create problems for oversight agencies

HUMAN SERVICES

Farm bill impacts CA's safety net programs

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

CA public libraries: organization, operations, services

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Sensible Sentencing for a Safer California. Little Hoover Commission. Feb. 2014. 48 p.

<http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/219/Report219.pdf>

"[R]ealignment alone will not stop the trajectory of offenders filling up state prisons.... As a first step, California should send a strong signal that the purpose of prison is for more than just punishment. The Commission urges policymakers to amend the penal code to expand the purpose of incarceration beyond punishment and also include reduced recidivism and successful community integration.... It is long overdue for California to embrace the science and evidence that drives criminal justice sentencing in other states and countries before time runs out and the courts begin releasing offenders."

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Retirement Security: Trends in Marriage and Work Patterns May Increase Economic Vulnerability for Some Retirees. Government Accountability Office. GAO-14-33. Jan. 15, 2014. 89 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-14-33>

“Over the last 50 years, the composition and work patterns of the American household have changed dramatically. During this period, the proportion of unmarried and never-married individuals in the population increased steadily as couples chose to marry at later ages and live together prior to marriage.... Taken together, these trends have resulted in a decline in the receipt of spousal and survivor benefits and married women contributing more to household retirement savings.... [W]omen with low levels of lifetime earnings and no spouse or spousal benefit may face greater risk of poverty in old age.”

ECONOMY

2014-2015 Economic Forecast & Industry Outlook: California and Southern California Including the National and International Setting. The Kyser Center for Economic Research, Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. Feb. 2014. 100 p.

<http://cdn.laedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/LAEDC-2014-15-February-Forecast-Report.pdf>

Predicting modest growth for the national economy, this forecast is bright for the California and southern California economies. Findings include: the national economy faces risks resulting from slower than anticipated growth among its trading partners; California should expect a stronger economy due to jobs growth and continued growth in a number of industries including health services, construction, and professional and business services; and, the southern California economy continues to improve as jobs return to the region from a broad spectrum of industries including health services, construction, and scientific and technical services.

EDUCATION

CTE Dual Enrollment: A Strategy for College Completion and Workforce Investment. By Jennifer Dounay Zinth. Education Commission of the States. Mar. 2014. 6 p.

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/11/45/11150.pdf>

Eighty-two percent of high schools had students in dual enrollment coursework in 2010-11 and nearly half of these schools had students participating in Career Technical Education (CTE) programs at the same time, which is over 600,000 students nationwide in both programs simultaneously. Dual enrollment CTE program participants are more likely to enroll in a four year university and have slightly higher completion rates than their peers.

EMPLOYMENT

The Effects of a Minimum-Wage Increase on Employment and Family Income. Congressional Budget Office. Feb. 2014. 43 p.

<http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/44995-MinimumWage.pdf>

This report analyzes two options for increasing the minimum wage: a \$10.10 option and a \$9.00 option. “Increasing the minimum wage would have two principal effects on low-wage workers. Most of them would receive higher pay that would increase their family’s income, and some of those families would see their income rise above the federal poverty threshold. But some jobs for low-wage workers would

probably be eliminated, the income of most workers who became jobless would fall substantially, and the share of low-wage workers who were employed would probably fall slightly.”

ENERGY

Hydraulic Fracturing in California: An Overview. By Pamela Martin. California Research Bureau. Mar. 2014. 2 p.

<http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/14/S-14-001.pdf>

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is an enhanced technique for oil and gas recovery that has garnered much media attention in recent years. California has been at the forefront of hydraulic fracturing use for more than 60 years, and has even been the site of several "record fracs" in its time. This Short Subject gives a brief history of this oil and gas recovery technique, as well as some of the major landmarks of government oversight in this state.

ENVIRONMENT

“Management for Mountain Pine Beetle Outbreak Suppression: Does Relevant Science Support Current Policy?” By Diana L. Six, et al. *Forests*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Jan. 15, 2014) pp. 103-133.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/f5010103>

“While the use of timber harvests is generally accepted as an effective approach to controlling bark beetles during outbreaks, in reality there has been a dearth of monitoring.... In this review, we use mountain pine beetle as an exemplar to critically evaluate the state of science behind the use of timber harvest treatments for bark beetle suppression during outbreaks. It is our hope that this review will stimulate research to fill important gaps and to help guide the development of policy and management firmly based in science, and thus, more likely to aid in forest conservation, reduce financial waste, and bolster public trust in public agency decision-making and practice.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Budgeting for the Future: Fiscal Planning Tools Can Show the Way. By Elizabeth C. McNichol, et al. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Feb. 2014. 53 p.

<http://www.cbpp.org/files/2-4-14sfp.pdf>

There are several fiscal planning tools that states should develop when planning their budgets. Policymakers should ensure that the budget provides a map for the future by establishing baselines for current services, creating multi-year revenue forecasts, seeking independent consensus on revenue forecasts and keeping the budget on course with the help of rainy day funds, debt level reviews, and tax expenditure oversight. Most states are not good at this sort of long-term planning; according to this report, California falls within the average range among states reviewed.

HEALTH

Internet Pharmacies: Most Rogue Sites Operate from Abroad, and Many Sell Counterfeit Drugs. Testimony by Marcia Crosse. Government Accountability Office. GAO-14-386T. Feb. 27, 2014. 17 p.

<http://gao.gov/assets/670/661177.pdf>

“Consumers have experienced health problems as a result of purchasing drugs from rogue Internet pharmacies, and the proliferation and patronage of such entities has rendered them a public health threat.

A number of federal and state agencies share responsibility for administering and enforcing laws related to Internet pharmacies.” This testimony is based on a July 2013 GAO report, in which the GAO identified ways that rogue Internet sites violate state and federal law, and described efforts to educate American consumers.

HUMAN SERVICES

***The Agricultural Act of 2014: Highlights of Impacts to California.* California Senate Office of Research. Feb. 2014. 4 p.**

<http://tinyurl.com/lyongta>

“[The] farm bill authorizes \$956 billion over the next 10 years, with nearly 80% of the funding allocated to nutrition programs. Approximately \$756 billion of the farm bill has been authorized for nutrition programs for 2014-23, most of which is going to the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the food stamp program known in California as CalFresh. SNAP received the most significant funding reductions from the farm bill: \$8 billion is being cut over the next 10 years.... Other nutrition programs impacted by the new farm bill include The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), a federal program that helps provide low-income people with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***California Public Library Organization 2013.* By Gerald Maginnity, et al. California State Library. June 2013. 24 p.**

http://www.library.ca.gov/lds/docs/CAPubLibOrg_2013.pdf

“A handful of state statutes and constitutional provisions dictate local public libraries’ formation procedures, governance structures, local financing, and service area. This report classifies library agencies into one of four categories, based on their legal authority and administrative structure: county libraries, city libraries, independent special district libraries, and joint powers of authority (JPA) libraries. It also summarizes the provisions associated with each library type and notes additional variations that may occur within each category.”

About *Studies in the News*

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