



## Studies in the News

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### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT**

*The Treatment of Persons with Mental Illness in Prisons and Jails: A State Survey.*

The Treatment Advocacy Center. Apr. 8, 2014. 116 p.

<http://www.tacreports.org/storage/documents/treatment-behind-bars/treatment-behind-bars.pdf>

This survey focuses on the treatment of seriously mentally ill inmates and the treatment practices being conducted in state jails and prisons. A survey of state and county corrections system officers was undertaken. Interviewees discussed some of the problems related to incarcerating mentally ill persons, particularly behavioral issues disturbing to other prisoners and staff, physical attacks, deterioration of

mental condition due to lack of treatment, and a disproportionate number of jail suicides. California's proportion of inmates with mental health issues is among the highest in the nation. This report discusses mental health procedures currently used in the 50 states and recommends providing appropriate treatment for inmates with serious mental illness.

## ECONOMY

***Delinquent Debt in America.* By Caroline Ratcliffe, et al. Urban Institute. July 30, 2014. 14 p.**  
<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/413191-Delinquent-Debt-in-America.pdf>

“Consumers are a major factor in economies. Their spending habits are often used as a bellwether for public confidence in a country’s fiscal standing.... Consumer debt is accumulated for different reasons and with different results. Productive debt—the kind that people take on when purchasing a home, financing a new business ... can help families accumulate wealth and achieve upward mobility. Unproductive debt—the kind that people take on to meet basic needs and expenses, such as when an unforeseen job loss or medical crisis arises ... does not have the same long-term benefits.... This brief paints a geographic portrait of financially distressed consumers in the United States.” In California the average debt is \$5,456, and 33% of Californians have debt in collections.

## EDUCATION

***Bumpy Path Into a Profession: What California’s Beginning Teachers Experience.* By Julia E. Koppich, et al. Policy Analysis for California Education. July 2014. 12 p.**  
<http://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/PACE%20Policy%20Brief%2014-2.pdf>

“In California as elsewhere, state policy anticipates that aspiring teachers will follow a uniform, multistep path into the profession.” This “study of California’s policies on induction, evaluation, clear credentialing and tenure for the state’s beginning teachers ... shows that California’s policy system fails to recognize the realities facing the majority of the state’s beginning teachers, who must follow a much longer, bumpier and more circuitous path into the teaching profession than state policymakers currently recognize.”

## EMPLOYMENT

***Survey Findings: State and Local Government Workforce: 2014 Trends.* Center for State and Local Government Excellence. May 2014. 8 p.**  
[http://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Workforce\\_Trends\\_2014.pdf](http://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Workforce_Trends_2014.pdf)

“Local and state governments are hiring again, although workforces remain smaller since the 2008 economic downturn. At the same time, human resource managers report recruitment and retention challenges as well as continued pressure on benefits, particularly health care.... Sixty-six percent [of state and local governments] hired employees in the past year with 55% hiring more than they did in 2012.... Forty-nine percent reported higher levels of retirement in 2013 compared with 2012; 22% reported that employees had accelerated their retirement.... Changes to benefits continue, with 61% of respondents reporting that their governments made changes to health benefits for both their active and retired employees.”

## ENVIRONMENT

***Understanding California's Groundwater (Series).* Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment. July/Aug 2014. 50 p.**

<http://waterinthewest.stanford.edu/groundwater/index.html>

The Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment and the Bill Lane Center for the American West have jointly published a series of articles exploring the issue of groundwater management in California. The series focuses on providing a synthesis of existing knowledge and new research. There are currently four articles in the series: an introduction to the issue, overview of gaps in data collection in the state, the potential for aquifer recharge, and a discussion of all the impacts and potential conflicts regarding groundwater pumping.

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Creating Growth Clusters: What Role for Local Government?* By Julian Scherr, et al. McKinsey Center for Global Government. July 2014. 6 p.**

<http://www.compete.org/images/uploads/File/PDF%20Files/Creating-growth-clusters-what-role-for-local-government%20%282%29.pdf>

“As the competition for investment and entrepreneurial talent reaches global proportions, municipal support for nascent entrepreneurial clusters becomes a must-have, especially for large metropolitan areas. City policy makers may find delivery units useful as they try to strengthen a start-up ecosystem. In introducing such an approach, policy makers should pursue the start-up model: rather than designing the perfect instrument and policy, they should see themselves as continuous problem solvers and work closely with the entrepreneurs and innovators around them.”

## HEALTH

***Looking Beyond the Marketing Claims of New Beverages.* By Shauna Pirotin, et al. University of California at Berkeley, Atkins Center for Weight and Health. Aug. 2014. 73 p.**

<http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/healthhalo.html>

“Researchers investigated the growing, and often confusing list of supplements added to these sugary drinks to compare marketing claims with the products’ real effects. The findings: In most cases, these beverages provide little or no health benefits, in some cases the added ingredients may actually be dangerous, and in virtually all cases, drink manufacturers attempt to put a ‘health halo’ over what is an otherwise, unhealthy sugary beverage.”

**“Geographic Clustering of Diabetic Low-Extremity Amputations In Low-Income Regions of California.” By Carl D. Stevens, et al. *Health Affairs*, vol. 33, no. 8 (Aug. 2014) pp. 1383-1390.**

<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/33/8/1383.full.pdf+html>

Using California Health Interview Survey data, the authors demonstrated a correlation between low income neighborhoods and high instance of amputations related to diabetes. “Neighborhoods with high amputation rates often cluster geographically into hot spots that correspond with areas where there is a high concentration of low-income households. Our regression analysis confirmed the patterns observed on the maps, which shows a strong association between diabetic lower-extremity amputation rate and density of low-income households in neighborhoods in both urban and rural California. Amputation rates varied tenfold between the highest- and lowest-income neighborhoods in the state.”

## HUMAN SERVICES

***Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): Size and Characteristics of the Cash Assistance Caseload.*** By Gene Falk. Congressional Research Service. R43187. Aug. 5, 2014. 23 p.  
<http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43187.pdf>

“TANF was created in the 1996 welfare reform law (P.L. 104-193), culminating decades of debate over the roles of low-income, single mothers in the home and in the workforce.... States have used TANF as a broad-based block grant to fund a wide range of benefits and services addressing conditions and causes of economic and social disadvantage of children, in addition to providing cash assistance or traditional ‘welfare.’ Additionally, both the size and the composition of the TANF cash assistance caseload have changed markedly since welfare reform legislation was debated in the mid-1990s. The caseload is much smaller—1.9 million families in FY2011 versus 5.0 million families in FY1994.”

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

***How Have Bridge Conditions Changed in Your State? Government Technology.*** Aug. 2014.  
<http://www.govtech.com/state/How-Have-Bridge-Conditions-Changed-in-Your-State.html>

Drawing on data from the U.S. Federal Highway Administration, National Bridge Inventory, this online tool allows for the identification of state-by-state trends in bridge conditions from 1993 through 2013. It features information for each state categorized by bridge inspection definition for (1) structurally deficient bridges, which “had deterioration of one or more major components, but not unsafe;” and (2) functionally obsolete bridges that were “built using outdated standards, such as older design features.” This site also provides the share of bridges by state that are either deficient or functionally obsolete. From 1993 to 2013, California’s share of bridges that were either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete was consistently between 25% and 30% of all bridges noted in the National Bridge Inventory.

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

**“Impact of Texting Laws on Motor Vehicular Fatalities in the United States.”** By Alva O. Ferdinand, et al. *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 104, No. 8 (Aug. 2014) pp. 1370-1377.  
(Available in the California State Library)

“Using a panel study design, we examined the effects of different types of texting bans on motor vehicular fatalities.... We used the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and a difference-in-differences approach to examine the incidence of fatal crashes in 2000 through 2010 in 48 US states with and without texting bans. Age cohorts were constructed to examine the impact of these bans on age-specific traffic fatalities.... Primarily enforced laws banning all drivers from texting were significantly associated with a 3% reduction in traffic fatalities in all age groups, and those banning only young drivers from texting had the greatest impact on reducing deaths among those aged 15 to 21 years. Secondly enforced restrictions were not associated with traffic fatality reductions in any of our analyses.”

## VETERANS

***Evaluation of Hospice and Palliative Care in Veterans Health Administration Facilities.***  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General. Aug. 11, 2014. 13 p.  
<http://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-14-00727-239.pdf>

“The VA Office of Inspector General Office of Healthcare Inspections completed an evaluation of hospice and palliative care in Veterans Health Administration facilities.... [W]e identified two opportunities for Veterans Health Administration facilities to improve. We recommended that the Under Secretary for Health, in conjunction with Veterans Integrated Service Network and facility leaders, ensures that: Facilities provide at least the minimum required Palliative Care Consult Team staffing, [and] [f]acilities provide end-of-life care training to staff who work in areas where they are likely to encounter patients at the end of their lives.”

### **About *Studies in the News***

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