



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

Issue 15-110

March 11, 2015

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Justice Department Announces Findings of Two Civil Rights Investigations in Ferguson, Missouri.
United States Dept. of Justice. Mar. 4, 2015.

<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-findings-two-civil-rights-investigations-ferguson-missouri>

"The Justice Department found that the Ferguson Police Department (FPD) engaged in a pattern of practice of conduct that violates the First, Fourth, and 14th Amendments of the Constitution.... [T]he Civil Rights Division reviewed more than 35,000 pages of police records; interviewed and met with city, police and court officials; including the FPD's chief and numerous other officers; conducted hundreds of in-person and telephone interviews, as well as participated in meetings with community members and

groups; observed Ferguson Municipal Court sessions, and; analyzed FPD's data on stops, searches, and arrests." (*Press Release*, Mar. 4, 2015).

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***Will the Check be in the Mail? An Examination of Paper and Electronic Transactional Mail.* Office of the Inspector General United States Postal Service. Feb. 9, 2015. 27 p.**
<https://www.uspsig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2015/rarc-wp-15-006.pdf>

"The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General collaborated ... to conduct research to better understand customers' preferences for receiving and paying bills. Specifically, the research examines 3 months of customer billing data from a major U.S. utility company.... The utility company's billing data revealed that 91% of customers chose to receive their bills by mail despite a clear preference to pay bills online.... Digital billing is less expensive than hard-copy billing, and cost is always a factor in any business decision. But customer satisfaction rates are a primary driver for companies that send transactional mail. While over time more customers may opt to receive bills electronically, our research shows that physical mail still plays an important role today and will continue to do so in the near future."

ECONOMY

***Carbon Market California: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Golden State's Cap-and-Trade Program, Year Two: 2014.* Katherine Hsia-Kiung, et al. Environmental Defense Fund. Jan. 2015. 55 p.**
http://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/content/carbon-market-california-year_two.pdf

This report is an analysis of California's cap-and-trade program, including available data and information from economists. "Despite dire predictions that cap-and-trade would destroy California industry, the state's economy is thriving, and the number of jobs is growing, even faster than in the rest of the country. This is especially true in the green tech sector, where the job growth rate, at five percent, was even higher than the statewide average. It is a small portion of the economy, but these are early days." (*Streetsblog*, Jan. 14, 2015).

EDUCATION

***Pathways to College and Career Readiness: Bringing the New California Standards to Life Through Linked Learning.* Education Trust-West. Feb. 2015. 12 p.**
<http://west.edtrust.org/resource/pathways-to-college-and-career-readiness-bringing-the-new-california-standards-to-life-through-linked-learning/>

Linked Learning is a new approach to college and career readiness: high school students combine a college preparatory curriculum with real-world work experiences. The idea is to engage all students in preparing for college and career—from all income levels and races/ethnicities. This brief describes how Linked Learning can be combined with the implementation of the Common Core standards. West Contra Costa Unified School District is highlighted for its "graduate profile" that sets expectations for how high school graduates will ready themselves for college and career.

EMPLOYMENT

America's Advanced Industries: What They Are, Where They Are, and Why They Matter. By Mark Muro, et al. Brookings. Feb. 2015. 88 p.

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports2/2015/02/03-advanced-industries#/M10420>

“At the national level, the 50-industry, R&D- and STEM-worker-intensive sector added almost 1 million jobs in the years 2010–2013, or nearly 18% of the nation’s total job growth.... [W]hile not all advanced industries contributed to the post-crisis jobs recovery, many did—and substantially. Computer systems design, at 256,600 jobs, and management, scientific, and technical consulting services, at 176,700, were the leading advanced industries in terms of job growth, while motor vehicle parts manufacturing added 93,600 jobs and oil and gas extraction added 38,800. These figures don’t compare to those of the top job-creating industries overall—restaurants (878,400 jobs) and temporary employment services (572,700)—but they certainly comprise the bulk of the high-*quality* employment that the nation has recovered since the crisis.” (*Brookings* blog, Feb. 25, 2015).

ENVIRONMENT

Unprecedented 21st Century Drought Risk in the American Southwest and Central Plains.

By Benjamin I. Cook, et al. *Science Advances*. Feb. 1, 2015. 7 p.

<http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/1/1/e1400082>

“In the Southwest and Central Plains of Western North America, climate change is expected to increase drought severity in the coming decades. These regions nevertheless experienced extended Medieval-era droughts that were more persistent than any historical event, providing crucial targets in the paleoclimate record for benchmarking the severity of future drought risks. We use an empirical drought reconstruction and three soil moisture metrics from 17 state-of-the-art general circulation models to show that these models project significantly drier conditions in the later half of the 21st century compared to the 20th century and earlier paleoclimatic intervals.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

What Counts: Harnessing Data for America’s Communities. Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, et al. Dec. 2014. 441 p.

<http://www.whatcountsforamerica.org/book/what-counts/>

(Available at the California State Library)

This book is a joint project of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco and the Urban Institute. It outlines opportunities and challenges for the strategic use of data to issues being faced in many communities: poverty, health, quality education and community vitality. It seeks to offer ideas for using data more meaningfully and to act as the basis for data discussions for future developments.

NRRI Update Shows Half Still Falling Short. By Alicia H. Munnell, et al. Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. Dec. 2014. 9 p.

<http://crr.bc.edu/briefs/nrri-update-shows-half-still-falling-short/>

The National Retirement Risk Index (NRRI) is a measure of the share of “working-age households who are ‘at-risk’ of being unable to maintain their pre-retirement standard of living in retirement.” Even though the stock market and housing market have improved in recent years, the NRRI indicates that as of 2013, “more than half of today’s households will not have enough retirement income to maintain their pre-retirement standard of living, even if they work to age 65—which is above the current average retirement age—and annuitize all their financial assets, including the receipts from a reverse mortgage on their

homes.” The findings indicate that when it comes to retirement plans, many Americans need to save more money and/or prepare to work longer.

HEALTH

***Promises Still to Keep: A Decade of the Mental Health Services Act.* Little Hoover Commission. Jan. 2015. 73 p.**

<http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/225/report225.html>

“Proposition 63, written by former Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg and approved by voters in 2004, created the Mental Health Services Act and imposed a 1% income tax on Californians earning \$1 million or more per year to pay for mental health programs. Funding from the proposition now accounts for about one-quarter of California’s total spending on mental health, according to the report. Though hailed by advocates as a necessary source of money for county programs, the Little Hoover Commission said authorities cannot ‘clearly show, much less measure, what more than \$13.2 billion has accomplished in terms of improving services’ for people with mental health needs.” (*Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 27, 2015).

HUMAN SERVICES

***California’s New Vagrancy Laws: The Growing Enactment and Enforcement of Anti-Homeless Laws in the Golden State.* Social Science Research Network. Feb. 2015. 53 p.**

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2558944

(Available at the California State Library)

“In recent decades, California cities have increasingly responded to persistent homelessness by criminalizing the presence of homeless people in public. The number of municipal codes criminalizing activities associated with being homeless—including sleeping, standing, and eating in public—has more than doubled since 1990 in the 58 cities studied.... The enactment of anti-homeless laws at the municipal level has expanded criminalization and punishment of the state’s most vulnerable residents by local authorities.... Enforcement approaches differ across cities, but their impact is consistent: the criminalization of homeless people perpetuates poverty, deprives people of basic rights, and drains city and state budgets.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***Beyond Traffic: Trends and Choices 2045.* U.S. Department of Transportation. Feb. 3, 2015.**

Blue Paper. 19 p: <http://www.dot.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/TheBluePaper.pdf>

Report. 322 p: http://www.dot.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/Draft_Beyond_Traffic_Framework.pdf

Addressing a concern that “inconsistent, unreliable funding and static policies” have contributed to a transportation infrastructure that is “in an increasingly deteriorated and fragile state,” this survey seeks to comprehensively examine the nation’s transportation system. A series of webinars drew over 1,300 participants, including engineers, truck drivers, safety advocates and disability rights advocates. “Our purpose in producing this report was to analyze the latest data and trends shaping transportation so we could objectively frame critical policy choices that need to be made.”

About *Studies in the News*

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