



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Respect and Legitimacy—A Two-Way Street: Strengthening Trust Between Police and the Public in an Era of Increasing Transparency. By Brian Jackson. RAND. Apr. 27, 2015. 28 p.

<http://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE154.html>

“The way that police power was applied during the eras of segregation and the civil rights movement placed police departments and their officers in direct opposition to communities advocating for social change. And in the years since, interactions with the police have been part of the continued experience of minority groups and their relationship with government, and are therefore central in debates about race and racism in the nation.... This paper focuses on what is known from research about trust-building and legitimacy of law enforcement agencies and the need for mutual trust between civic leaders and residents.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Americans Greatly Overestimate Percent Gay, Lesbian in U.S. By Frank Newport. Gallup. May 21, 2015.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/183383/americans-greatly-overestimate-percent-gay-lesbian.aspx>

“[A]ll available estimates of the actual gay and lesbian population in the U.S. are far lower than what the public estimates, and no measurement procedure has produced any figures suggesting that more than one out of five Americans are gay or lesbian. The widely off-the-mark nature of Americans' estimates is underscored by the finding that in the most recent update, from May 6-10, only 9% of Americans estimate that the gay and lesbian population is less than 5%—where Gallup's tracking figure would put it—while at the other end of the spectrum, 33% estimate it as more than 25%.”

ECONOMY

How Housing Matters. Hart Research Associates for the MacArthur Foundation. June 2015. 38 p.

http://www.macfound.org/media/files/E-11540_How_Housing_Matters_2015_FULL_REPORT.pdf

“The study finds that housing costs for Americans lead to larger problems beyond difficulty in finding a dream home. Housing prices have skyrocketed in recent years, while income levels remain stagnant, the report states. The federal minimum wage has remained at \$7.25 per hour since 2009, though President Obama is pushing for an increase to \$10.10. The report also noted a lack of confidence in the government—at national and local levels—in putting affordable housing at the forefront of the policy agenda. While a lot of focus has been on improving education and healthcare costs, the study suggests Americans want housing affordability on the minds of their political representatives.” (*USA Today*, June 9, 2015).

Out of Reach 2015. National Low Income Housing Coalition. May. 19, 2015.

Full Report. 264 p.: http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR_2015_FULL.pdf

Interactive Map: <http://nlihc.org/oor/>

In a report compiling US Census, BLS and HUD data, the National Low Income Housing Coalition has released a study looking at the rental market for each state in the United States. The report states that the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in California is \$1,386/month. Following recommendations that no more than 30% of household income should be spent on housing, this means a one-earner household would need an annual wage of \$55,433 for housing to be affordable. This is equivalent to an hourly wage for \$26.65/hour for a single full-time worker. At current minimum wage levels of \$9.00/hour, a worker would need to work 3 full-time minimum wage jobs in order to meet affordability guidelines for an average two-bedroom apartment in California.

EDUCATION

Striking a Chord: The Public's Hopes and Beliefs for K-12 Music Education in the United States: 2015. National Association of Music Merchants Foundation, et al. May 2015. 32 p.

<http://www.nammfoundation.org/educator-resources/striking-chord-publics-hopes-and-beliefs-k-12-education-united-states-2015>

This study, based on 1,800 interviews with teachers and parents nationwide, found that 77% of teachers and 64% of parents felt “access to music and arts education was ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ important.” To increase access to music education, the researchers developed some policy recommendations, such as ensuring access to musical instruments of students choice, reducing disparities in music education access and quality, reversing cuts to arts and music programs, increasing the scope of music instruction and aligning it to national standards, and promoting the use of Title I funds for music instruction.

ENVIRONMENT

Preliminary Analysis: 2015 Drought Economic Study. By Richard Howatt, et al. CA Department of Food and Agriculture. May 31, 2015. 9 p.

https://watershed.ucdavis.edu/files/biblio/2015Drought_PrelimAnalysis.pdf

“The drought is expected to be worse for California’s agricultural economy this year because of reduced water availability, according to preliminary estimates released today by the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences.... The total cost of this year’s drought on California’s economy as a whole will be \$2.7 billion and the loss of about 18,600 jobs. Farmers will have 2.7 million acre-feet less surface water than they would in a normal water year—about a 33% loss of water supply, on average. The impacts are concentrated mostly in the San Joaquin Valley and are not evenly distributed; individual farmers will face losses of zero to 100%.” (*Press Release*, June 2, 2015).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Success Strategies for Well-Funded Pension Plans. Center for State & Local Government Excellence. Feb. 2015. 10 p.

<http://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/SLGE15-01-Success-Stories-Final.pdf>

This review of four defined-benefit public pension systems with a history of being well-funded sought to capture common characteristics and qualities. It included samples from Delaware, Illinois, Iowa and North Carolina, While each has its own history and operates under unique legal frameworks, common practices include: a commitment to fund the annual required contribution through both good and bad fiscal periods; conservative assumptions that are adjusted based on expertise; and changes to benefit levels and contribution rates as needed. The funded ratio for the four plans studied ranges from 87.6% to 99.8%.

HEALTH

“Extreme Markup: The Fifty US Hospitals With the Highest Charge-to-Cost Ratios.” By Ge Bai, et al. *Health Affairs*, vol. 34 no. 6 (June 2015) pp. 922-928.

<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/34/6/922.full.pdf+html>

Infographic: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/health/hospital-price-gouging/>

“Using Medicare cost reports, we examined the fifty US hospitals with the highest charge-to-cost ratios in 2012. These hospitals have markups (ratios of charges over Medicare-allowable costs) approximately ten times their Medicare-allowable costs.... While most public and private health insurers do not use hospital charges to set their payment rates, uninsured patients are commonly asked to pay the full charges, and out-of-network patients and casualty and workers’ compensation insurers are often expected to pay a large portion of the full charges. Because it is difficult for patients to compare prices, market forces fail to constrain hospital charges. Federal and state governments may want to consider limitations on the charge-to-cost ratio, some form of all-payer rate setting, or mandated price disclosure to regulate hospital markups.”

HUMAN SERVICES

Immigration and Child Welfare. Child Welfare Information Gateway. Apr. 2015. 15 p.
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/immigration.pdf>

Immigrant families may face challenges including “legal barriers to accessing services; child trauma resulting from difficult immigration or refugee experiences, extended separation from parents, or a parent’s detention/deportation by immigration authorities; acculturation and language issues; and more. In order for child welfare professionals to provide the most useful and culturally competent services to immigrant families, it is important that they are aware of these issues and how they can impact service delivery.... [T]his issue brief addresses child welfare’s work with immigrant children and families; examines current issues related to immigration and child welfare; provides examples of programs and promising practices; and points to resources for professionals, families, and youth.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Motorcycle Lane-splitting and Safety in California. By Thomas Rice, et al. Safe Transportation Research & Education Center. May 29, 2015. 33 p.
<http://www.ots.ca.gov/pdf/Publications/Motorcycle-Lane-Splitting-and-Safety-2015.pdf>

“This document summarizes an analysis of data from the California Enhanced Motorcycle Collision Data Project. We report the prevalence of lane-splitting among 5,969 motorcyclists who were involved in traffic collisions from June 2012 through August 2013 and examine how other characteristics varied by whether the motorcyclist was lane-splitting at the time of their collision.... Motorcyclists who were lane-splitting were notably different from those that were not lane-splitting. Compared with other motorcyclists, lane-splitting motorcyclists were more often riding on weekdays and during commute hours, were using better helmets, and were traveling at lower speeds. Lane-splitting riders were also less likely to have been using alcohol and less likely to have been carrying a passenger.”

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