



Studies in the News

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Studies in the News will not be published next week in observance of Thanksgiving. Publication will resume on Wednesday, December 2, 2015.

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

***The Potential of Blind Collaborative Justice: Testing the Impact of Expert Blinding and Consensus Building on the Validity of Forensic Testimony.* By Carolyn Wong, et al. RAND. Aug. 2015. 39 p.**

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR804-1.html

“Biased expert testimony is a leading cause of wrongful convictions, and new techniques are needed to reduce such biases. This study conducted an experimental investigation of two potential contributors to biased testimony within adversarial litigation involving forensic evidence.... A sample of 580 scientists was asked to read a vignette about a hypothetical criminal case and solve a statistical reasoning problem bearing on the case evidence. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three types of party representation (prosecution, defense, or blinded).... We found no evidence of an effect of blinding on accuracy. The results revealed a consistent, positive effect of expert consensus feedback on response accuracy. We conclude that expert consensus feedback could improve the validity of expert testimony.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Disconnected Youth: A Look at 16 to 24 Year Olds Who Are Not Working or In School.
By Adrienne L Fernandes-Alcantara. Congressional Research Service. Oct. 1, 2015. 41 p.
<https://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R40535.pdf>

“[T]he CRS analysis finds that a greater share of minority youth, particularly black males, are disconnected, and that their rates of disconnection have been higher over time. The analysis evaluates some other characteristics that have not been widely studied in the existing research. For instance, compared to their peers in the general population, disconnected youth tend to have fewer years of education, and are more likely to live apart from their parents.... Policymakers may consider interventions to reconnect youth to work and/or school. Interventions can target children and youth at a particular stage of their early lives. Interventions can also focus on particular institutions or systems, such as the family, community, and schools.”

EDUCATION

Returning Vets Don't Feel Their College Understood Their Needs. By Stephanie Marken. Gallup. Nov. 11, 2015. 6 p.
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/186548/returning-vets-don-feel-college-understood-needs.aspx>

“College graduates who served in the military while enrolled in their undergraduate program are more likely to strongly agree that their college or university understood their unique needs than those who served in the military before enrolling in college. Thirty percent of all military service members and veterans strongly agree that their university understood the unique needs of military service members and veterans.... Colleges and universities will continue to benefit from experimentation with programs and support services for this population, as it is important that military service member and veteran programs be tailored to accommodate the diverse needs of these students.”

Developing Excellent School Principals to Advance Teaching and Learning: Considerations for State Policy. By Paul Manna. The Wallace Foundation. Sep. 2015. 88 p.
<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/state-policy/Documents/Developing-Excellent-School-Principals.pdf>

“In calling for the principalship to be a policy priority across the states, this report encourages state leaders to envision their principals as invaluable multipliers of effective teaching and learning in the nation’s schools. Operating with that vision, and understanding the potential role of state policy to help achieve it, can help state officials to ensure that state policies work in mutually supportive ways, and are coherent enough to channel state and local energies in positive directions while remaining flexible enough to adapt to local circumstances. These are difficult balancing acts to execute, but with care and learning from work underway in state capitals across the nation, some of which this report has highlighted, state leaders can improve the chances that all schools will be led by excellent principals who are advancing teaching and learning.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Climate Change and the U.S. Energy Sector: Regional Vulnerabilities and Resilience Solutions.
By Matt Antes, et al. U.S. Department of Energy. Oct. 2015. 193 p.

http://www.circleofblue.org/waternews/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/EIA_Regional_Climate_Vulnerabilities_and_Resilience_Solutions_0.pdf

This report looks at projected climate impacts on the U.S. energy sector by region. Including California as part of the Southwestern region, it identifies the following vulnerabilities associated with the impacts of climate change: electricity demand, thermoelectric energy, hydropower, electric grid, oil and gas exploration and production, and fuel transport. Further, it projects that all regions will be subject to increasing temperatures and heatwaves, and suggests that California may be impacted by decreasing water availability, increasing wildfire, and increasing sea level rise and storm surge.

Initial Characterization of the Groundwater System Near the Lower Colorado Water Supply Project, Imperial Valley, California. By Alissa L. Coes, et al. U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. Oct. 2015. 72 p.

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2015/5102/sir20155102.pdf>

“The All-American Canal (AAC), which supplies Colorado River water to agricultural users in Imperial Valley, recharged the local aquifer system through seepage losses from 1940 until lining of the canal was completed in 2010. The Lower Colorado Water Supply Project (LCWSP) is next to the AAC and has withdrawn groundwater to supply California users since the mid-1990s.... After lining the AAC in 2007-10, groundwater elevations began to decline because seepage from the canal was removed as a recharge source, and groundwater flow directions shifted back to pre-canal conditions. Groundwater-elevation declines were greatest along the AAC, where elevations decreased 20-40 feet between 2005 and 2011. Groundwater elevations in the vicinity of pumping from the LCWSP had the greatest decreases, as much as 40-45 feet between 2005 and 2011.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

State Regulatory Requirements for Virtual Currency Activities: CSBS Model Regulatory Framework. Conference of State Bank Supervisors. Sep. 15, 2015. 14 p.

<http://www.csbs.org/regulatory/ep/Documents/CSBS-Model-Regulatory-Framework%28September%2015%202015%29.pdf>

“The Conference of State Bank Supervisors (CSBS) issued ... its Model Regulatory Framework for State Regulation of Certain Virtual Currency Activities (Model Framework). CSBS is issuing this ... to assist states in licensing and supervising virtual currency activities. The Framework includes components that CSBS has identified as key to a virtual currency regulatory regime that protects consumers and the larger marketplace, while supporting responsible innovation.... In addition to providing a definition for virtual currency and articulating specific covered virtual currency activities ... [it] includes a new supervision component ... to protect customer access to funds in the event of an institution’s failure.” (*Press Release*, Sep. 15, 2015).

HEALTH

“Exposure to Harmful Workplace Practices Could Account For Inequality in Life Spans Across Different Demographic Groups.” By Joel Goh, et al. *Health Affairs*, vol. 34, no. 10 (Oct. 2015) pp. 1761-1768.

<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/34/10/1761.full.pdf+html>

Researchers “gathered data on education levels, workplace stresses, deaths, and life expectancy. Then they looked for connections among them. They concluded that, for every ethnic group and gender, the workplace contributed more to annual mortality for people with less education than for people with more schooling. For non-Hispanic white males, for example, the workplace contributed to about 5% of annual deaths for those with a graduate school education, 9% for men with at least some college, and 13% for males with a high school education or less. The gap was even greater for Hispanic men. Workplace issues accounted for 6.2% of the deaths of those with a graduate education compared to 19% for Hispanic men with a high school education or less.” (*California Health Report*, Oct. 19, 2015).

Health Coverage and Care for Undocumented Immigrants. By Shannon McConville, et al. **Public Policy Institute of California. Nov. 2015. 11 p.**

http://ppic.org/main/publication_quick.asp?i=1167

“About half of California’s undocumented immigrants have incomes low enough to qualify for Medi-Cal should coverage be offered to them. Their highest concentrations are in Los Angeles, Orange, and Santa Clara Counties, the Inland Empire, and the San Joaquin Valley. Those with incomes too high for Medi-Cal are concentrated in the greater San Francisco Bay Area, where premium costs are highest. Even with access to Covered California, lack of subsidies will keep many of them from coverage.... In this report, we outline the different types of coverage expansions being considered for California’s undocumented residents. We also provide regional population estimates of undocumented immigrants in California, breaking these estimates down into income categories defined by eligibility thresholds for public health insurance programs.”

HUMAN SERVICES

3 Things You May Have Missed in the New Poverty, Income, and Inequality Data. By Melissa Boteach, et al. **Center for American Progress. Sep. 16, 2015. 11 p.**

<https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/16121003/BoteachCensusPovertyData-brief2.pdf>

“New data released today show that the share of Americans with incomes below the poverty line stayed flat between 2013 and 2014 at 14.8%.... [This brief discusses] three larger points related to the new data that are often missed in the national discussion:... First, poverty and economic insecurity are commonplace experiences, with four in five Americans experiencing poverty or related forms of economic insecurity during their working years. Second, the poverty rate remains higher than it should be because of wage stagnation and the growth of inequality ... And third, social insurance and assistance programs are helping Americans from all social classes and must be strengthened, not cut.”

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