



Studies in the News

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Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Study links criminal activity to air pollution

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Middle class now less than 50% of population, shrinking

ECONOMY

Student loan balances make getting a mortgage harder

EDUCATION

Challenges in filling “middle-skill jobs” in San Diego County

Incarcerated youth education: equity & quality varies among states

EMPLOYMENT

Health care industry projected to see largest job growth through 2024

ENERGY

Study examines energy, food, and water nexus in CA

ENVIRONMENT

Report outlines strategy for CA sustainable growth by 2050

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Best practices in developing state budgetary building blocks

HEALTH

Army health report finds injuries affect nearly 300k soldiers annually

HUMAN SERVICES

Social service programs that foster multiple positive outcomes

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Mapping tool of “economically distressed area” designation

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Air Pollution and Criminal Activity: Evidence from Chicago Microdata. By Evan Herrnstadt, et al. NBER Working Paper No. 21787. National Bureau of Economic Research. Dec. 2015. 41 p.

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w21787>

(Available at the California State Library)

“A large and growing literature documents adverse impacts of air pollution on a wide range of individual outcomes in the short- and long-run. Using a variety of quasi-experimental strategies, the literature documents that pollution harms adult and infant health,... reduces productivity and participation in the

labor market participation, impairs short-run cognition and lowers test scores and induces avoidance behavior. This paper adds a new dimension to the literature on the adverse effects of pollution, by documenting the first quasi-experimental evidence that air pollution affects violent criminal activity. Building on previous work in economics and medicine, our results suggest that pollution may affect cognition in ways that extend beyond impairing standardized test performance and may influence behavior along dimensions more complicated than those previously considered.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***The American Middle Class is Losing Ground: No Longer the Majority and Falling Behind Financially.* Pew Research Center. Dec. 9, 2015. 74 p.**

http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2015/12/2015-12-09_middle-class_FINAL-report.pdf

“Rapid growth of upper-income households, coupled with an increase in less-educated, low earners, has driven the decline of the middle-income population to a hair below 50% of the total this year, Pew found. In 1971, the middle class accounted for 61% of the population, and it has been declining steadily since. The [study] found that the shares of upper-income and lower-income households grew in recent years as the middle shrank—with the higher-income tier growing more. In that sense, the nonpartisan group said, ‘the shift represents economic progress.’” (*Sacramento Bee*, Dec. 10, 2015).

ECONOMY

***The Impact of Rising Student Loan Debt on Mortgage Borrowing.* By Yuliya Demyanyk, et al. Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. Dec. 4, 2015. 3 p.**

<http://bit.ly/1lqgBoA>

“From 2005 to 2015, outstanding student loan debt rose from \$364 billion to \$1.2 trillion, and the percentage of people aged 18 to 30 with a student loan increased from 27% to 40%.... As the percentage of people with student debt ... increased ..., the percentage of those with a mortgage declined. In 2005, prior to the recession, 11% of young people had a mortgage, but that number has since fallen to 7%.... Prior to the recession in 2005, the percentages in each state were relatively similar for young people with and without student loans.... [T]he most recent data indicate that there are now stark differences between borrowers with and without student loans. Along both coasts, the share of young people with a mortgage is much lower for those with student loans than those without.

EDUCATION

***San Diego County Middle-Skill Jobs: Gaps and Opportunities.* San Diego Workforce Partnership. Nov. 2015. 30 p.**

http://workforce.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/reports/industry/middle-skill_jobs_gaps_and_opportunities_2015.pdf

San Diego County has many “middle-skill” jobs going unfilled, due to a lack of qualified workers to fill these jobs. Middle-skill jobs require a high school diploma, and an associate degree or less. Researchers suggest several recommendations to improve this situation: more industry- or employer-driven curriculum and programs for training; more employer participation in high school and higher education curriculum development; more hands-on internship and apprenticeships; and push from policymakers to enable more collaboration between employers and educational institutions in closing the skills/job gap.

***Locked Out: Improving Educational and Vocational Outcomes for Incarcerated Youth.* Council of State Governments Justice Center. Nov. 2015. 16 p.**

<http://bit.ly/1HbYoMj>

“The survey findings presented in this report demonstrate that many states are struggling to ensure that incarcerated youth are afforded access to the same educational and vocational services as their peers in the community. In most states, it is likely that policymakers and even state agency leaders lack the full picture of what educational and vocational services are available to incarcerated youth; who is responsible for the provision of these services; and what, if any, outcomes students are achieving. Thus, policymakers and juvenile justice and education agency leaders should use the findings and recommendations in this brief to further scrutinize how educational and vocational services are overseen and delivered to incarcerated youth in their state, how youth are supported in making a successful transition back to the community, and how student outcome data for incarcerated youth are collected, analyzed, reported, and used for improvement and accountability purposes.”

EMPLOYMENT

***Employment Projections—2014-2024.* Bureau of Labor Statistics. Dec. 8, 2015. 10 p.**

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecopro.pdf>

“Healthcare occupations and industries are expected to have the fastest employment growth and to add the most jobs between 2014 and 2024.... With the increase in the proportion of the population in older age groups, more people in the labor force will be entering prime retirement age. As a result, the labor force participation rate is projected to decrease and labor force growth to slow. This slowdown of labor force growth is expected, in turn, to lead to Gross Domestic Product ... growth of 2.2% annually over the decade. This economic growth is projected to generate 9.8 million new jobs—a 6.5% increase between 2014 and 2024.”

ENERGY

Oil, Food, and Water: Challenges and Opportunities for California Agriculture.

By Matthew Heberger, et al. Pacific Institute. Dec. 2015. 65 p.

http://pacinst.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2015/12/PI_OilFoodAndWater_.pdf

This study looks at the energy-food-water nexus in California through oil and gas exploration and production. It analyzes “the water-related interactions between oil and gas production and agriculture,” and “describe(s) some of the water-related challenges that arise when these industries operate alongside one another.” Also considered are concerns “related to emerging issues such as hydraulic fracturing, known as fracking.” The authors found that unlined percolation pits are a significant risk to groundwater; injected wastewater potentially affects drinking, irrigation, and livestock water; and fracking chemicals have an unknown impact upon farmworkers, crops, and livestock.

ENVIRONMENT

A Strategy for California @ 50 Million: Supporting California’s Climate Change Goals.

By Ken Alex, et al. Governor’s Office of Planning and Research. Nov. 2015. 34 p.

https://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/EGPR_Nov_2015.pdf

This report updates the 1978 Environmental Goals and Policy study entitled *Urban Strategy for California*, and revisits the strategy and advances a vision for California geared toward sustainable growth in anticipation of estimates suggesting the state will reach 50 million residents by 2050. The components of this vision include increasing the share of renewable energy; reducing petroleum use; increasing energy

efficiency; reducing emissions; and stewarding natural resources. Goals for this strategy include: reduce land consumed for development, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and prioritize conservation of agricultural land.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Beyond the Basics: Best Practices in State Budget Transparency.* By Katherine Barrett, et al. The Volcker Alliance. Dec. 2015. 30 p.**

<https://www.volckeralliance.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Beyond%20the%20Basics%20-%20The%20Volcker%20Alliance.pdf>

“While many US states have tried to encourage transparency in their annual or biennial budgets, all fifty still lack a full range of disclosures about the use of one-time revenue to cover recurring expenditures, the deferral of spending, and the underfunding of infrastructure maintenance and retirement obligations for public workers. This lack hinders debate over spending priorities and encourages the use of budget gimmicks that can lead to poorly informed policymaking. The following working paper explains the basic principles of sound budgeting and provides recommendations for improving budgetary transparency, based on a review of literature and interviews with numerous current and former state budget directors, finance officials, and public administration professors specializing in state and local government budgeting.”

HEALTH

***Health of the Force.* U.S. Army Medical Command. Nov. 2015. 59 p.**

http://www.army.mil/article/160206/Army_Medical_releases_Health_of_Force_report_card/

“This month, Army Medical Command released the first-ever Health of the Force, or HOF report. The report provides a snapshot of the health of active-duty Soldiers on all major U.S.-based installations in 2014. The report tallied injuries, behavioral health, chronic disease, obesity, tobacco use, sleep disorders, hospital admissions, and other health measures across 30 Army installations. Key Performance Triad measures of sleep, activity and nutrition were also tracked. The result was the creation of an overall installation health index.” Among the findings, “[i]njuries affect nearly 300,000 Soldiers annually. Some individuals experience multiple injuries in a single year, impacting personal readiness and increasing the burden on medical systems. Approximately 1,295 new injuries per 1,000 Soldiers were diagnosed in 2014.”

HUMAN SERVICES

***Social Service Programs that Foster Multiple Positive Outcomes.* By Vanessa Sacks, et al. Child Trends. Dec. 2015. 16 p.**

<http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/2015-48MultipleOutcomesBrief.pdf>

"Social service programs are typically funded by agencies with a specific mission. Accordingly, evaluations also tend to have a narrow focus, be it drug use, crime, or teen pregnancy. However, research and practitioners' experience indicate that varied problem behaviors often share root causes, [which] suggests that effective interventions may actually influence multiple outcomes, whether or not they are designed to do so.... In this brief, we highlight examples of programs that have conducted rigorous experimental evaluations and found impacts on multiple outcomes." This brief identified 14 such programs, including Children's Aid Society-Carrera Program, Communities that Care, Familias Unidas, and Guiding Good Choices.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Economically Distressed Area (EDA) Mapping Tool. California Department of Water Resources. Oct. 2015.

http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/grants/resources_eda.cfm

This web-based tool is designed to help local agencies identify and evaluate the status of areas within their jurisdiction that may be economically distressed, in accordance with the definition stated in the recently passed Proposition 1, the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014. The tool was specifically created to supplement and facilitate the application process for the grant and loan programs associated with the recent water bond.

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