



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Transforming Prisons, Restoring Lives. Charles Colson Task Force on Federal Corrections. Urban Institute. Jan. 2016. 132 p.

<http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000589-Transforming-Prisons-Restoring-Lives.pdf>

“After decades of unbridled growth in its prison population, the United States faces a defining moment. There is broad, bipartisan agreement that the costs of incarceration have far outweighed the benefits, and that our country has largely failed to meet the goals of a well-functioning justice system: to enhance public safety, to prevent future victimization, and to rehabilitate those who have engaged in criminal acts.... This report provides both an urgent call to action and a roadmap for reforming the federal prison system, which, with 197,000 people behind bars, was the largest in the nation as 2015 drew to a close.

By adopting the recommendations detailed here ... we can reduce the federal prison population by 60,000 people over the coming years and achieve savings of over \$5 billion.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

More Californians Think Terrorist Attacks are Very Likely in the State. Field Poll. Jan. 8, 2016. 4 p.
<http://www.field.com/fieldpollonline/subscribers/RIs2524.pdf>

“Following the December 2nd terrorist attack that killed fourteen and wounded twenty-two in San Bernardino, an increasing proportion of California voters think it is very likely that there will be more such attacks in the state in the future. However, voters express only moderate confidence in the ability of the CIA, FBI and other law enforcement agencies to break up such attacks.... In addition, 55% worry that the government will go too far in its anti-terror efforts.... The survey also finds that by a 51% to 37% margin Californians oppose sending American ground troops into combat to fight the extremist group Islamic State.”

ECONOMY

Changes in Labor Participation and Household Income. By Robert Hall, et al. Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. Feb. 1, 2016. 5 p.
<http://www.frbsf.org/economic-research/publications/economic-letter/2016/february/labor-force-participation-and-household-income/>

“The percentage of people active in the labor force has dropped substantially over the past 15 years. Part of this [results from] the aging of the workforce. However, the participation rate among people in their prime working years—ages 25 to 54—has also fallen.... [F]indings suggest that the decline in participation among people of prime working age has been concentrated in higher-income households. A similar pattern appears among younger workers, between the ages of 16 and 24. However, this has not been the case among older workers. Workers over the age of 55, particularly those in households at the top of the income distribution, have been increasingly participating in the labor force.”

EDUCATION

State Pre-K Funding for 2015-16 Fiscal Year: National Trends in State Preschool Funding. By Emily Parker, et al. Education Commission of the States. Jan. 2016. 15 p.
http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/01252016_Prek-K_Funding_report-4.pdf

This report offers an overview of how states are funding pre-K programs. Many states are moving towards stronger support of pre-K funding. “In 2015-16, only five states (Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, South Dakota and Wyoming) did not provide state funding for pre-K. This compares to 11 states that were not investing in pre-K just three years ago.... Of the 45 states and the District of Columbia funding Pre-K programs, 32 states and the District of Columbia increased their total investment in pre-K.” The increased spending took different forms. In New York, it went towards a universal, full-day pre-kindergarten, and in Utah, it went towards a quality pre-K educational software program made available to families when pre-K spots are filled.

EMPLOYMENT

California New Business Creation. Next 10. Dec. 16, 2015. 15 p.

<http://next10.org/sites/next10.huang.radicaldesigns.org/files/california-new-business-creation.pdf>

“In 2013 California tied for 5th in state establishment entry rates, tied for 4th in job creation rates from new firm growth, and 4th in total net job creation. Far from being avoided as a place to do business, California ranks anywhere from above average to one of the best in these main categories. The secular decline in business dynamism that is occurring in California is also present in the national economy and in most other states.... The importance of encouraging the creation of new establishments and firms in the economy cannot be stressed enough.... [D]ata shows that over time, more than 100% of net job creation comes from establishments in their first or second year of existence.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Improving the Federal Response to Western Drought: Five Areas for Reform. By Jeffrey Mount, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. Feb. 2016. 38 p.

http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_216JMR.pdf

“This report begins with a spotlight on the latest western drought, followed by a roadmap of the various federal roles that touch on western water management. It then identifies a suite of modest, pragmatic federal actions that can help western states prepare for droughts and water scarcity—and better manage drought emergencies when they do occur. These recommendations are based on analysis of public information and interviews with more than 40 individuals at the federal, state, and local levels.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Digital Inclusion Survey 2014. By John Carlo Bertot, et al. Information Policy and Access Center at the University of Maryland, et al. Oct. 2015. 125 p.

<http://www.ala.org/research/digitalinclusion>

“Over the past twenty years of Public Libraries and Internet research, libraries have constantly evolved in tandem with advances in technology.... Challenges—including capacity and aging infrastructure—remain. Still ... libraries remain on the front lines of access to information and digital literacy resources, connecting users to health insurance resources, job and business opportunities, and educational tools.” This survey provides details on the services being delivered across the country and the ways that libraries are transforming to meet the demands of their communities. This report provides state level details, interactive maps and policy briefs on key topics including community access, digital inclusion and literacy, e-government, employment and infrastructure/building constraints.

HEALTH

Payoffs for California College Students and Taxpayers from Investing in Student Mental Health. By J. Scott Ashwood, et al. RAND. Dec. 9, 2015. 13 p.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1370.html

In 2011, a coalition of California counties, with funding from California’s 2004 Mental Health Services Act, implemented a strategic program to deliver mental health prevention and early intervention programs across the state’s public higher education systems. This report examines the potential impact and cost-benefit ratios on the use of mental health services among college and university students. The number of students seeking mental health services increased 13% during the first year. The study predicts an

additional 329 students will graduate as a result of receiving mental health treatment; their anticipated lifetime earnings are estimated to be as much as \$56 million for each year of investment in these programs.

HUMAN SERVICES

Foster Care: HHS Could Do More to Support States' Efforts to Keep Children in Family-Based Care. Government Accountability Office. GAO-16-85. Oct. 2015. 36 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/673029.pdf>

“Eight states GAO reviewed had a variety of efforts under way to help ensure they placed foster children in family-based settings rather than in group homes or institutions, also known as congregate care.... States’ efforts to ensure appropriate placements included more oversight of decisions to place children in congregate care and the length of stay; enhanced recruiting and training for specialized foster families to care for children with serious emotional, behavioral, or medical problems; and increased supports for families in crisis.... However, these states’ percentages of foster children in congregate care still ranged from 5% to 34%, mirroring the variation nationwide in fiscal year 2013.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Highway Boondoggles 2: More Wasted Money and America’s Transportation Future. By Jeff Inglis, et al. US PIRG Education Fund. Jan. 2016. 70 p.

http://www.uspirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/US_Boondoggles2_scrn_0.pdf

In this report, the authors provide critiques of twelve large highway projects across the country. The report argues that these projects are not justified either because they would not provide a benefit to the transportation system, or because their negative impact on surrounding communities outweighs any advantages. Additionally, the authors contend that the transportation needs of Americans are changing, and expanding highways may not be the best use of transportation dollars. Included in the critique is the proposed San Gabriel Valley Route 710 double-bore tunnel.

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