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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT


“The Supreme Court has struck down a federal law that banned sports betting in almost every state, a precedent-shattering decision that opens the door to legalized sports gambling nationwide. New Jersey has been fighting since 2010 to make sports wagering legal at racetracks and casinos in the state, but had repeatedly been blocked by the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) of 1992. The court ruled 6-3 that PASPA’s provisions prohibiting states from authorizing and licensing a sports gambling scheme violate the anti-commandeering rule…. In anticipation of the ruling, 16 state legislatures across the country have begun considering measures to legalize sports betting.” (The Hill, May 14, 2018).

ECONOMY

http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0956797617741720

“Rising economic inequality has become a pressing issue around the world. Hackel and Stanford colleague Jamil Zaki were specifically interested in understanding how inequality in social capital … might emerge. … In line with previous research, participants shared a larger percentage of points with givers were typically generous (i.e., those who shared half of their wealth) as opposed to those who were less generous. But they also shared more with givers who had greater wealth. As a result, givers who started with more points also accumulated more compared with less-wealthy givers, even when they offered an equally generous percentage of their wealth…. These reputational ratings intensified the wealth gap, as investors chose to interact with the highest-rated giver 93% of the time.” (Eureka Alert, Mar. 22, 2018).

EDUCATION


“The state’s community college students missed out on nearly $130 million in federal Pell Grant funds in a single semester, according to research from the Wheelhouse Center for Community College Leadership and Research at the University of California, Davis, School of Education…. In 2015, more than 471,000 California students received Pell Grants. But the researchers discovered that more than 20% of the state’s two-year college students who successfully applied for aid, demonstrated their financial eligibility and enrolled in the required number of credits still did not receive federal aid. The researchers took a sample of about 320,000 students who were enrolled in 2014 and found nearly 71,000 of them seemed to be Pell eligible but did not receive the grant.” (Inside Higher Ed, May 2, 2018).

https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/Strategic_Compensation_Databurst

This brief summarizes state policies on teacher pay—and highlights some notable efforts in individual states. In 36 states and the District of Columbia, teacher pay is established via collective bargaining. In 9 states, the state establishes the minimum salary, and allows the local districts to determine the salary schedule. In 14 states, the state establishes the minimum salary. Louisiana is highlighted for its wide
range of criteria in establishing salaries—teacher effectiveness, certification area, geographic area, and subject area need. Utah is noted for its emphasis on teacher evaluations for establishing compensation. The author suggests that more schools should try this form of “strategic compensation”: “[C]ompensating teachers strategically requires all states to take a holistic approach to teacher compensation. Such an approach should ensure districts consider additional compensation for effective performance; teaching in high-need schools and subjects; and relevant, prior, non-teaching work experience.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT


“Americans’ safety, productivity, comfort, and convenience depend on the reliable supply of electric power. The electric power system is a complex ‘cyber-physical’ system composed of a network of millions of components spread out across the continent. The components are owned, operated, and regulated by thousands of different entities…. Given the nature of the system, there is simply no way that outages can be completely avoided, no matter how much time and money is devoted to such an effort…. This report … focuses on identifying, developing, and implementing strategies to increase the power system’s *resilience* in the face of events that can cause large-area, long-duration outages; blackouts that extend over multiple service areas or states, and last several days or longer. Resilience is not just about lessening the likelihood that these outages will occur. It is also about limiting the scope and impact of outages when they do occur, restoring power rapidly afterwards, and learning from these experiences to better deal with events in the future.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT


“[Governor] Brown has proposed stashing most of [the $6.1 billion budget surplus] in reserves, while many lawmakers want to use some of the money to tackle the state’s homelessness crisis. Brown’s budget proposal … would result in … a grand total of $15.7 billion in reserves…. If the state faced a moderate recession, similar to the 2001 tech crash … it could face a $40 billion shortfall, which would mean coming up with an additional $25 billion through other means…. [The proposal] also brings the rainy fund close to the cap that would trigger any additional surplus monies be diverted to pay for infrastructure projects…. Mayors from California’s eleven largest cities and state lawmakers introduced separate measures in February that would designate $1.5 billion to $2 billion from the anticipated surplus to deal with the growing homelessness crisis.” (*The Bond Buyer*, Mar. 8, 2018).

HEALTH

[https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6717e1.htm?s_cid=mm6717e1_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6717e1.htm?s_cid=mm6717e1_w)  

“Vectorborne diseases are major causes of death and illness worldwide. In the United States, the most common vectorborne pathogens are transmitted by ticks or mosquitoes, including those causing Lyme disease; Rocky Mountain spotted fever; and West Nile, dengue, and Zika virus diseases…. Nearly
650,000 cases of vectorborne disease were reported during 2004–2016 (Table). Tickborne diseases, which accounted for >75% of reports, occur throughout the continental United States, but predominate in the eastern part of the country and in areas along the Pacific Coast. Reported cases of tickborne disease have doubled in the 13-year analysis period, with Lyme disease accounting for 82% of cumulative reported tickborne disease…. Preventing and responding to vectorborne disease outbreaks are high priorities for CDC and will require additional capacity at state and local levels for tracking, diagnosing, and reporting cases; controlling vectors; and preventing transmission.”

HUMAN SERVICES


“Millions of low-income Californians eligible for food stamps are not receiving the benefit, earning the state one of the lowest rankings in the nation for its participation in the program. Just three states — Utah, North Dakota and Wyoming — have lower rates of participation, according to the latest available federal data released this year. Meanwhile, California is among the leaders on enrollment in Medi-Cal, the state’s version of Medicaid, which also serves people living in low-income households.... To address this gap between food assistance and medical assistance, California has begun leveraging its vast pool of new Medi-Cal beneficiaries to boost enrollment in CalFresh.” (NPR, Mar. 1, 2018).

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY


“Americans have grown somewhat more ambivalent about the impact of digital connectivity on society as a whole. A sizable majority of online adults (70%) continue to believe the internet has been a good thing for society. Yet the share of online adults saying this has declined by a modest but still significant 6 percentage points since early 2014.... Meanwhile, the share saying the internet has been mostly a bad thing for society is largely unchanged over that time: 15% said this in 2014, and 14% say so today.” Among respondents who say the internet has been a bad thing for society, 25% say it isolates people, and 16% cite fake news and misinformation.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE


“Hit-and-run crashes in the United States are trending in the wrong direction,” said Dr. David Yang, executive director of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. The new study found that most victims of fatal hit-and-run collisions—65%—were pedestrians or cyclists and that almost 20% of all pedestrian deaths over the last decade were caused by hit-and-run crashes, compared to 1% of driver fatalities." The survey findings reveal a disturbing disconnect between what drivers know to be risky—texting while driving, for instance—and how they actually behave. (ABC News, Apr. 26, 2018).
RECOMMENDED READING

Available at the California Research Bureau

“What happens if we unravel one amendment, regardless of the way we feel about it? What does it mean for those amendments we prefer? This is the puzzle of the 2nd Amendment, which, Waldman admits, is a problematic text at best. ‘Let's be clear,’ he writes: ‘the eloquent men who wrote “we the people” and the First Amendment did us no favors in the drafting of the Second Amendment.’ By way of explanation, he takes us on a looping ride from the colonial era, when gun ownership was not only common but also, in many cases, compelled because of the militias, to our own post-Sandy Hook America, in which ‘Second Amendment fundamentalism rests powerfully on the idea that an empowered individual—armed to protect himself (gender definitely intended) and his family—is the morally virtuous way to live.’ The movement he traces is a key one: from the people (as a group) to people, from defense of the homeland to defense of the home.” *(Los Angeles Times*, May 23, 2014).

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