CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY
Rate of older Americans declaring bankruptcy has doubled since 1991

EDUCATION
Survey of parents finds arming teachers not a popular idea
Threat assessment model for school safety

EMPLOYMENT
Study looks to public investments to lift wages of care workers

HEALTH
U.S. rate of opioid use by pregnant women quadrupled; CA had lowest increase

HUMAN SERVICES
Federal spending on children projected to decline in the next decade

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
Study examines multiple, continuous ways Google collects data on its users

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
How design flaw led to crash of FCC net neutrality page

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY


“Whether America is facing a ‘retirement crisis’ in which seniors are making do with shrinking financial resources has been widely debated. But here’s a telling metric: Seniors are making a larger share of bankruptcy filings…. The figures should worry advocates for seniors, because in terms of the overall financial health of the 65+ cohort, it's likely to be the tip of the iceberg.” Since 1991, the rate of older Americans filing bankruptcy has doubled, and among the bankrupt, the percentage of older persons has increased five-fold. Older American report struggles with inadequate income and unmanageable healthcare costs while dealing with a reduced social safety net. (Los Angeles Times, Aug. 6, 2018).
EDUCATION

2018 PDK Poll of the Public’s Attitudes toward the Public Schools: School Security Results. PDK International. 2018. 8 p. 

A survey of school-age parents finds that 34% fear for their child’s safety at school. Generally, parents are in support of better mental health screening of students, armed police in schools and metal detectors. There is less interest in having armed teachers or staff in schools: “67% of parents prefer not to have their child in a classroom where the teacher is armed, and 63% generally oppose allowing teachers and staff to carry guns. Still, that shifts to an even split if rigorous training and screening are provided.”


“When establishing threat assessment capabilities within K-12 schools, keep in mind that there is no profile of a student attacker. There have been male and female attackers, high-achieving students with good grades as well as poor performers. These acts of violence were committed by students who were loners and socially isolated, and those who were well-liked and popular. Rather than focusing solely on a student’s personality traits or school performance, we can learn much more about a student’s risk for violence by working through the threat assessment process, which is designed to gather the most relevant information about the student’s communications and behaviors, the negative or stressful events the student has experienced, and the resources the student possesses to overcome those setbacks and challenges.”

EMPLOYMENT

http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/at-the-wage-floor/

“[T]he median hourly wage for care workers in 2016 stood at just $10.29 an hour and employer-provided health insurance was uncommon. And while these are some of the fastest growing occupations in the economy, their inflation-adjusted wages have been stagnant over the past decade. Moreover, the workforce is disproportionately women of color and immigrants.” In the short term, authors suggest we “[c]over care workers in minimum wage laws, without exception…. support increases to worker compensation above the required minimum wage…. [r]eform child care subsidy eligibility rules and parent fee schedules…. [a]nd e]nsure comprehensive ongoing data to inform policy and investment” with an overall long-term goal of full public funding.

HEALTH

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6731a1.htm?s_cid=mm6731a1_w

This report analyzes the extent of opioid use by pregnant women. “National rates of opioid use disorder are increasing among reproductive-aged and pregnant women, and opioid use during pregnancy is
associated with adverse maternal and neonatal outcomes. National opioid use disorder rates at delivery more than quadrupled during 1999–2014. Rates significantly increased in all 28 states with 3 years of data. ... Over the study period, the average annual rate increase was lowest in California (0.01 per 1,000 delivery hospitalizations per year), whereas the highest average annual rate increases occurred in Maine, New Mexico, Vermont, and West Virginia, ranging from 2.5 to 5.4 opioid use disorder diagnoses per 1,000 delivery hospitalizations per year.”

HUMAN SERVICES


This report provides an analysis of federal expenditures on children from 1960 to 2017 and an expenditure projection through 2028. “More than three-fifths of expenditures on children are from tax provisions or health programs. Medicaid is the largest source of federal support for children, followed by the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit. The share of federal expenditures for children that is targeted to low-income families has grown over time, reaching 61% in 2017.... Under current law, the children’s share of the budget is projected to drop from 9.4% to 6.9% over the next decade, as spending on Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and interest payments on the debt consume a growing share of the budget.”

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

https://digitalcontentnext.org/blog/2018/08/21/google-data-collection-research/

“The [study] said that an idle smartphone running Google’s Android operating system with its Chrome browser open sends data to Google’s servers as often as 14 times an hour. And while not using Google’s devices or services limits data collection, the dominance of Google’s advertising network makes it highly difficult to prevent Google from collecting some data, the study also highlights. It provides a broad look at the multiple aspects of Google’s techniques for collecting data.” Google questioned the study’s credibility, stating the firm “does not link anonymous activity with people’s Google accounts once they sign in.” *(Washington Post, Aug. 21, 2018).*

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uPl5NsXowzbXrYl9KHBp-GViiTLQgyW/view

In 2017, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was considering a controversial plan to end restrictions on the ability of internet service providers to provide preferential access for certain types of web content (net neutrality). Following an appeal to oppose repealing net neutrality by HBO’s “Last Week Tonight with John Oliver,” the FCC’s comment page was unavailable to the public for a period of time. The official FCC response was that the site had suffered from an extensive “Distributed Denial of Service” (DDoS) attack, or cyberattack in which multiple compromised computer systems flood a targeted website and cause a denial of service to users of the site. However, a recent investigation by the FCC’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) found no evidence of any such attack. Instead, the OIG determined that the failure was caused by a spike in legitimate commenting activity following the appeal, combined with design issues that prevented the system from handling such a high volume of comments.
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