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**CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY**


Eight in 10 eligible adults in California are registered to vote. Independents are now the state’s second-largest voting bloc. Likely voters (47%), infrequent voters (41%), unregistered adults (47%) and independents (42%) all lean Democratic, but are ideologically mixed. Likely voters are disproportionately white (42% of population, 59% of likely voters). Turnout lags for Latinos (34% of population, 21% of likely
voters) and Asian Americans (15% of population, 11% of likely voters). Likely voters are also older, more educated and affluent, homeowners, and U.S.-born.

**ECONOMY**


The report finds “that increases in the number of universities are positively associated with future growth of GDP per capita…. [A] 10% increase in a region's number of universities per capita is associated with 0.4% higher future GDP per capita in that region … [but] not simply driven by the direct expenditures of the university, its staff and students. Part of the effect of universities on growth is mediated through an increased supply of human capital and greater innovation. Furthermore, we find that within countries, higher historical university presence is associated with stronger pro-democratic attitudes.”

**EDUCATION**


https://caldercenter.org/sites/default/files/CALDER%20WP%20110818.pdf

“Instructional time is a fundamental educational input, yet we have little causal evidence about the effect of longer school days on student achievement. This paper uses a sharp regression discontinuity design to estimate the effects of lengthening the school day for low-performing schools in Florida by exploiting an administrative cutoff for eligibility. Our results indicate significant positive effects of additional literacy instruction on student reading achievement. In particular, we find effects of 0.05 standard deviations of improvement in reading test scores for program assignment in the first year, though long-run effects are difficult to assess.”


https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2702861

This article is an investigation of veterans' tuition benefits for graduate programs. “Tuition benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs program covered only about 45% of the tuition for medical school, compared to 85% for law and 100% for MBA programs, the study found. In real dollars, that added up to a shortfall of about $110,000—roughly $27,500 each year—for veterans in MD programs after their GI Bill benefits were applied…. Medical school tuition typically is more expensive than tuition for law and business schools. However, [the author] noted, medical schools studied also gave less direct support—approximately $22,000 a year compared to about $26,000 for business school and $33,000 for law school.” (*Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, Sep.18, 2018).

**EMPLOYMENT**


“Financial trouble lurks when one understands that the bulk of … retirement assets are held by individuals in the top income quartile, and that the typical American worker falls behind in meeting recommended
guidelines for retirement readiness…. Over 100 million working age individuals (59.3%) do not own any retirement account assets, whether in an employer-sponsored 401(k) type plan or an IRA…. When all working age individuals are included—not just individuals with retirement accounts—the median retirement account balance is $0 among all working individuals…. Even after counting an individual's entire net worth—a generous measure of retirement savings—three-fourths (76.7%) of Americans fall short of conservative retirement savings targets…. Public policy can play a critical role in putting all Americans on a path toward a secure retirement by strengthening Social Security, expanding access to low-cost, high quality retirement plans, and helping low-income workers and families save.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT


“America’s national parks are warming up and drying out much faster than the rest of the United States, according to a new study on the impacts of climate change on U.S. parks…. The changing conditions are threatening protected ecosystems from the Everglades in Florida to Denali National Park in Alaska. The study found that the 417 protected areas in the U.S. national parks system warmed an annual 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) between 1885 and 2010—twice the average U.S. rate—with the most significant temperature increases happening in Alaska. Annual precipitation in parks, which cover a combined 85 million acres, declined 12% over the same period, compared to a 3% average drop across the U.S. If nations fail to curb greenhouse gas emissions … temperatures in national parks would increase 3 to 9 degrees Celsius by 2100, the study concluded. But the study’s authors stress that drastic reductions in emissions could reduce warming in national parks by as much as two-thirds.” National parks in California include Yosemite, Death Valley, Joshua Tree, Point Reyes national seashore, and Sequoia and Kings Canyon. (YaleEnvironment360, Sep. 24, 2018).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

http://www.urbandisplacement.org/research#section-132 (Summary and report/map links)

Reports. 24 p. each:
http://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/alamedafinal9_18.pdf (Alameda County)
http://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/cc_final9_18.pdf (Contra Costa County)
http://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/sf_final9_18.pdf (San Francisco County)

Individual map links:
http://www.urbandisplacement.org/rentchangemap (Rent and demographic change)
http://www.urbandisplacement.org/migrationmap (Migration by race and income)

“The Bay Area’s soaring housing costs are pushing poor people into neighborhoods where poverty and racial segregation are on the rise…. As a result, the region's low-income families—particularly minority families—are increasingly cut off from relatives, their children may face worse health outcomes and parents’ commutes to work can dramatically lengthen…. The analysis showed that across the Bay Area, a 30% increase in median rent in a given neighborhood corresponded with a more than 20% decrease in the number of low-income African Americans, Latinos and Asians living there. The researchers found no significant relationship between rent increases and losses of low-income white households.” (San Francisco Chronicle, Sep. 19, 2018).
HEALTH


“California became very successful in controlling rising health care costs by promoting price competition through market-based, managed care policies. However, recent data reveal that the state has not been able sustain its initial success in controlling growth in hospital prices. Two powerful trends emerged in California that eroded the conditions needed to sustain price competition. To ensure timely access to emergency hospital services, government regulators enacted regulations that had the unintended effect of giving hospitals tremendous leverage when contracting with health plans. Also, antitrust authorities allowed hospitals to consolidate into multihospital systems by adding members that were not direct competitors in local markets. The combined effect of these policies and consolidation trends was a substantial reduction in the competitiveness of provider markets in California, which reduced health plans’ ability to leverage competitive provider markets and negotiate lower prices and other benefits for their members. Policy makers can and should act to restore competitive conditions.”


“California has heavily concentrated hospital, physician, and health insurance markets, but their current structure and functioning is not well understood…. In 2016, seven counties were high on all six measures used in our hot-spot analysis (four horizontal concentration and two vertical integration measures), and five counties were high on five. The percentage of physicians in practices owned by a hospital increased from about 25% in 2010 to more than 40% in 2016. The estimated impact of the increase in vertical integration from 2013 to 2016 in highly concentrated hospital markets was found to be associated with a 12% increase in Marketplace premiums. For physician outpatient services, the increase in vertical integration was also associated with a 9% increase in specialist prices and a 5% increase in primary care prices. Legislative proposals, actions by the state’s attorney general, and other regulatory changes are suggested.”

HUMAN SERVICES


“An increasing share of spending on the safety net goes to families above the poverty line. Low-income and even middle-income families are also more reliant on means-tested transfers than in the past…. Two of the main drivers of this shift seem to be … Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Most Medicaid spending now goes to families above the bottom quintile of the distribution. For SNAP, the trend is less stark, with most spending still flowing to the poorest families. Nonetheless, the share going to the second quintile has risen steadily, to account for a quarter of the overall SNAP expenditure by 2014.”

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

“In a potential game changer for the health care industry, a new cell phone app and lab kit now allow a smartphone to identify bacteria from patients anywhere in the world. With the new app, doctors will be able to diagnose diseases and prescribe the appropriate antibiotic within a one-hour office visit, meaning faster recovery—and lower treatment costs—for patients.” The creators of this application believe that the app has the potential to bring diagnostics within easy reach remote locations. (Science & Technology Research News, Sep. 21, 2018).

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