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Middle-class sizes in U.S. cities reflect local demographic, industrial patterns

ECONOMY
Closing gender gaps could lead to greater economic gains than previously estimated

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Studies on CA education find progress, but large funding, achievement gaps

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Slow but ‘encouraging’ rise of women in corporate board seats

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Interactive map shows how climate change compounds multiple hazards

GENERAL GOVERNMENT
LAO offers ‘perspectives for the Legislature to consider’ on taxing sugary drinks

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Number of CA uninsured could grow to 4.44 million by 2023

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How states determine eligibility, provide cash assistance under TANF

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AI in smartphones may jeopardize anonymized health data

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

[https://www.brookings.edu/research/where-does-the-american-middle-class-live/](https://www.brookings.edu/research/where-does-the-american-middle-class-live/)

Metropolitan areas:
[https://www.brookings.edu/research/where-does-the-american-middle-class-live/#dashboard](https://www.brookings.edu/research/where-does-the-american-middle-class-live/#dashboard)

“The nation’s 382 metropolitan areas had 280 million residents in 2017, representing six in seven Americans…. Metropolitan areas with the largest middle classes are almost exclusively small and mid-sized…. Notably, metro areas with larger Hispanic populations also have larger low-income populations, but middle classes of about the same size as other metro areas. Metro areas with large Asian
populations, most of which are in California, have smaller middle classes and larger high-income household shares. Metro areas where a larger share of the population works in retail, construction, administrative services, agriculture, manufacturing, and transportation have larger middle classes on average.”

ECONOMY


“Our analysis springs from the observation—supported by considerable microeconomic evidence—that women and men bring different skills and perspectives to the workplace, including different attitudes to risk and collaboration…. The evidence—from macroeconomic, sectoral, and firm-level data—shows that women and men complement each other in the production process…. GDP gains from closing gender gaps are likely to be larger than we thought, based on models that do not account for gender complementarity.” (VoxEU, Dec 5, 2018).

EDUCATION


This report is the second in the “Getting Down to Facts” research, begun in 2008. It “provides in-depth analysis of the state education system as of 2018 and looks at what is working well and where improvement is still needed. The report's findings are contained in 36 separate studies thoroughly researched by over 100 leading academics from top research institutions across California and the United States.” Some of the key findings: “1) Over the past decade a multitude of reforms have resulted in some improvement. But, the system still must ensure that educators and other practitioners have the skills, information and materials they need to put major reforms more fully into practice. 2) Large achievement gaps persist in California by race, ethnicity, income, and English learner (EL) status. 3) California’s children are behind before they enter Kindergarten. The system needs a continued focus on closing achievement gaps through multiple approaches including enhanced early childhood education.”

EMPLOYMENT


“The alliance’s study found that African-American women and women from Asian and Pacific Island backgrounds made particularly substantial inroads on Fortune 500 boards during the period in question. African-American women held 26.2 percent more directors’ seats in 2018 than they had in 2016, while women of Asian and Pacific Island heritage held 38.6 percent more…. The presence of some directors on multiple boards suggests ‘that while diversity of boards may be increasing, there is not necessarily an equivalent rate of increase in the number of new women and minorities on the boards,’ the study said.” (The New York Times, Jan. 15, 2019).
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT


“California wildfires this month … are also among the most immediate and devastating examples of the compounding effects of global warming…. If global greenhouse gas emissions continue on their current trajectory, many more people across the globe will become vulnerable to multiple climate hazards at the same time—such as heat waves, rising seas, and drought—by the end of the century…. The San Francisco Bay Area will be simultaneously vulnerable to rising seas, changes in ocean chemistry, heat waves, drought, loss of fresh water, extreme rainfall, and wildfires.…. ‘Climate change is a hazard multiplier.’” (Bloomberg Environment, Nov. 20, 2018).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT


“Taxes on sugary drinks have become increasingly common in recent years. In June 2018, the Legislature passed a law … prohibiting local governments from levying such taxes (and other taxes on groceries) through 2030. The law stated the Legislature’s intent to regulate the imposition and collection of such taxes to the exclusion of local action. As such, the Legislature may face the following decisions: Should the state levy an excise tax on sugary drinks? If so, how should the tax be designed? This report provides information and perspectives for the Legislature to consider as it weighs these choices.”

HEALTH


“California’s successful implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) resulted in historic increases in health insurance coverage. … Without state action to protect and build upon these coverage gains, we project that the uninsurance rate could grow to 11.7% in 2020, or approximately 4.02 million people, and to 12.9% in 2023, or 4.4 million people…. To protect the progress made under the ACA in expanding health coverage and to reduce the remaining coverage gaps, the state could expand Medi-Cal to all low-income residents regardless of immigration status, provide state subsidies to improve affordability of individual market premiums and out-of-pocket costs, implement a state individual mandate, and continue to support and strengthen outreach and enrollment efforts, among other strategies. As federal decisions threaten to reverse health coverage gains around the country, these policies would help to ensure that California continues to build on its successes and drive toward its goal of achieving universal health coverage.”


**HUMAN SERVICES**


The purpose of this publication is “to provide researchers and policymakers with easy access to detailed information on how states provide cash assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The dozens of tables in this book collectively describe how states determine eligibility for TANF benefits, how they compute program benefits for eligible families, and the work requirements and time limits that they impose. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2017, 1.095 million families received cash aid from TANF in the average month.” The Databook summarizes a subset of the information in the [Welfare Rules Database](https://www.urban.org/welfare-rules-database), a publicly available, online database tracking state cash assistance policies.

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**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**


“[T]he study suggests current laws and regulations are nowhere near sufficient to keep an individual's health status private in the face of AI development…. The findings show that by using artificial intelligence, it is possible to identify individuals by learning daily patterns in step data, such as that collected by activity trackers, smartwatches and smartphones, and correlating it to demographic data. The mining of two years' worth of data covering more than 15,000 Americans led to the conclusion that the privacy standards associated with 1996's HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) legislation need to be revisited and reworked.” ([Science Daily](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/01/190103173726.htm), Jan. 3, 2019).

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