Studies in the News
California Research Bureau, California State Library
July 17, 2019

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**CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT**

http://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/educ/Postsecondary-Programs-in-Prisons_v02.pdf

*Graphic: How many people are locked up in the United States?*

“In an era of national record-low 3.8% unemployment, the unemployment rate among formerly incarcerated people stands at a significant 27%.... Facing changes in population demographics, some states regard incarcerated people nearing the end of their sentences as a possible resource to help address many challenges: the need for a stronger workforce, the need to reduce state spending, and the
need for former prisoners to rebuild their lives and contribute to their communities. This brief provides an overview of the issues relating to prison postsecondary education programs with examples of state responses aimed at creating possible benefits for the participants, the workforce and economy, and the state taxpayers.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

https://www.probolskyresearch.com/2019/06/18/california-is-not-prepared-for-the-next-economic-downturn/

“Most California voters don’t think the state is ready for a severe economic downturn, according to a new survey. A poll from Probolsky Research … found 63% of voters—including a majority of both Democrats and Republicans—don’t think the state government is prepared for a recession…. California’s latest budget heading to Gov. Gavin Newsom would boost the state’s reserves to about $20 billion, which is on the lower end of the $20 billion to $40 billion the Legislative Analyst’s Office recommends the state have on hand for a mild to moderate recession.” ([Sacramento Bee](https://www.sacbee.com), June 18, 2019).

Results by gender, party, and age

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Source: Problosky Research

ECONOMY


“Many sectors of the U.S. economy seem to be increasingly dominated by a handful of large and powerful players…. The vast majority of smartphones run software developed by one of two companies—Apple or Google. For 98% of consumers, the talk and data services that power those phones come from one of four providers—Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, or Sprint. And virtually all of the web-based searching on phones and computers flows through one of Google’s many platforms, to the point that ‘googling’ has become synonymous with internet searching in general…. Concentration in the retail sector has increased by more than 400% since 1982, and concentration in finance has more than doubled since 1992…. The literature on this topic shows, there is evidence both for and against the rise of market power in the modern economy. In many cases, this conflicting evidence reflects different interpretations of
phenomena that are inherently difficult to measure…. In summary, there is no shortage of explanations for the observed phenomena of rising market concentration and markups, and not all of those explanations point to a commensurate increase in market power.”

EDUCATION

**Computer Science in California Schools: An Analysis of Access, Enrollment and Equity.**

“Examining 4 years of data from the California Department of Education and the College Board, this report summarizes current and trend data on the availability of computer science courses, enrollment and participation in computer science courses, passage rates on AP CS [Advanced Placement Computer Science] exams, and equity gaps by race, gender, socioeconomic status, and geography.” Key findings: “1) More than half of all high schools in California do not offer any CS courses, and low-income students, students of color, and rural students are least likely to have access. 2) Student enrollment in introductory CS courses has nearly doubled across California in the past 3 years, and enrollment in AP CS has tripled. Yet, just a small fraction of the high school students in California take CS courses (3%), and there are significant disparities by race/ethnicity and gender in CS participation. 3) 71% of students enrolling in AP CS courses across California receive passing scores on the AP CS exams (one standardized indicator of performance), and significant gaps exist in passage rates by race/ethnicity.”

EMPLOYMENT

[https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/The_Way_We_Were.pdf](https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/The_Way_We_Were.pdf)

Interactive maps: [https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/manufacturingstates/](https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/manufacturingstates/)

“Manufacturing in the United States has declined from its heyday decades ago, but it remains a major source of good jobs in most states for people without bachelor’s degrees…. As the manufacturing industry migrated from a stronghold in the Northeast to current hubs in the Southeast and Midwest, its share of employees fell from 23% of American workers in 1940 to around 10% in 2016 while service jobs grew from 21% to 55%…. Among the study’s other key findings about changes from 1940 to 2016: Employment in agriculture, mining, and manufacturing combined fell from more than 40% of U.S. workers to less than 15%. The greatest growth in skilled-service industries was in health services, which increased from 2% to 14%.” ([Diverse: Issues in Higher Education](https://www.diverseissuemagazine.com), June 26, 2019).

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

**High Tide Tax: The Price to Protect Coastal Communities from Rising Seas.** The Center for Climate Integrity Resilient Analytics. June 2019. 27 p.

Interactive data: [https://www.climatecosts2040.org/](https://www.climatecosts2040.org/)

Using climate shift models and data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), this study creates four different climate change scenarios, focusing on resulting sea-level rise in the next few decades. Based on the infrastructure considered at risk along the U.S. coast, the study then estimates the cost to build protective sea walls. The study’s interactive data feature breaks out cost by state, county, city, and congressional district. California is the 8th most costly state, with an estimated $22
billion needed for sea walls. Solano, Humboldt, and Mendocino Counties are projected to cost the most in sea wall construction in the coming decades.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT


“The report details best practices in three areas: making withdrawals from rainy day funds, replenishing of funds, and addressing revenue volatility. It also grades states based on their reserve fund balances and policies…. Rather than prescribe a dollar figure or percentage states should set aside, the Volcker report recommends states factor in the volatility of their revenue sources when devising a savings plan…. To compensate for revenue volatility, the report highlights California’s practice of depositing excess cash in its rainy day fund when revenues exceed a certain amount…. Seventeen states received A’s for their rainy day fund balances and policies, [including California,] 23 received B’s, eight received C’s and two received D’s.” (Route Fifty, July 11, 2019).

HEALTH


The study’s author, 13-year-old Nora Keegan, hypothesized that the volume of hand dryers are detrimental to children’s hearing, particularly since the sound is louder at children’s ear heights. “For the study, which was conducted between 2015 and 2017, she visited more than 40 public washrooms in Alberta, Canada. She used a professional decibel meter to measure sound levels of hand dryers from various heights and distances…. She discovered that Xlerator hand dryers and two types of Dyson Airblade hand dryers posed the greatest threats to children's hearing. These types all exceed 100 decibels—a volume that can lead to 'learning disabilities, attention difficulties, and ruptured ear drums,’ according to the study.” (NPR, July 9, 2019).

HUMAN SERVICES


“More than 8 million children could lose their health insurance under a controversial US government proposal that would penalize immigrants for using benefits if they apply for green cards or visas, according to new research…. The study's authors said it would put 8.3 million children currently enrolled in Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) or receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits at risk—including 5.5 million children with specific medical needs. These include 615,842 children with asthma, 583,700 with disabilities or functional limitations, 53,728 with epilepsy and 3,658 with cancer.” (The Guardian, July 1, 2019).
About the California Research Bureau

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