

Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT

Corporate Taxpayers & Corporate Tax Dodgers, 2008-10. By Robert S. McIntyre, et al. Citizens for Tax Justice & the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. Nov. 2011. 71 p.

<http://www.ctj.org/corporatetaxdodgers/CorporateTaxDodgersReport.pdf>

"This study profiles 280 of America's most profitable companies [and] finds that 78 of them paid no federal income tax in at least one of the last three years. Thirty of the 280 Fortune 500 companies enjoyed a negative income tax rate over the three year period, despite combined pre-tax profits of \$160 billion. These 280 companies received a total of nearly \$223 billion in tax subsidies." (*Stockton Record*, Nov. 7, 2011).

EDUCATION

Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School. By Catherine Hill, et al. American Association of University Women. Nov. 2011. 76 p.

<http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/upload/CrossingTheLine.pdf>

“Sexual harassment is part of everyday life in middle and high schools. Nearly half (48%) of the students surveyed experienced some form of sexual harassment in the 2010-11 school year, and the majority of those students (87%) said it had a negative effect on them. Verbal harassment made up the bulk of the incidents, but physical harassment was far too common. Sexual harassment by text, e-mail, Facebook, or other electronic means affected nearly one-third (30%) of students. Interestingly, many of the students who were sexually harassed through cyberspace were also sexually harassed in person. Girls were more likely than boys to be sexually harassed, by a significant margin...resulting in decreased productivity and increased absenteeism from school.”

***The Educational Cost of Schoolhouse Commercialism.* By Alex Molnar, et al. National Education Policy Center. Nov. 2011. 41 p.**

<http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/CommTrends-2011%20%282%29.pdf>

“Over the past several decades, schools have faced increasing pressure to partner with businesses, both to be seen as responsive to the business community and out of the hope that partnerships would help make up budget shortfalls as states reduced public funding for education....It is relatively easy to understand how corporate commercializing activities harm children educationally by undermining curricular messages (as when candy and soft drink ads contradict nutrition lessons) or by displacing educational activities (as when students spend time focused on a corporate contest rather than the curriculum). A less obvious, though perhaps more serious, educational harm associated with school commercialism is the threat it poses to critical thinking.”

ENERGY

***The 2011 State Energy Efficiency Scorecard.* By Michael Sciortino, et al. American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. Oct. 2011. 122 p.**

<http://www.aceee.org/sector/state-policy/scorecard> (Full report requires free registration).

"Despite crunched budgets, states spent \$4.5 billion on energy efficiency projects in 2010--up from \$3.4 billion in 2009.... California was unseated from the top slot, moving to second place in overall ranking. Massachusetts jumped ahead primarily because of its adoption of advanced building codes and land-use policies.... 24 states have now set long-term energy savings goals. States that adopted such policies a few years ago have passed others in the rankings.... States such as California, Maryland, Massachusetts and Washington have seen the biggest improvements in energy-efficient transportation, [while] more than half of states still have minimal or no transportation policies." (Stateline.org, Oct.21, 2011).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Public Pension and Retiree Health Benefits: An Initial Response to the Governor's Proposal.* Legislative Analyst's Office. Nov. 8, 2011. 36 p.**

http://www.lao.ca.gov/reports/2011/stadm/pension_proposal/pension_proposal_110811.pdf

“We view the Governor's proposal as a bold starting point for legislative deliberations.... His proposals would shift more of the financial risk for public pensions...to employees and retirees.... Despite the strengths of the Governor's pension and retiree health proposal, it leaves many questions unanswered. In particular, we do not understand key details of how his hybrid benefit and retirement age proposals would work. Moreover, the Governor's plan leaves unaddressed...the huge funding problems facing the state teachers' retirement fund, the University of California's (UC's) significant pension funding problem, retirement health benefit liabilities, and other issues.”

HEALTH

A Patchwork of Progress: Changes in Overweight and Obesity Among California 5th, 7th, and 9th Graders, 2005-2010. By Susan H. Babey, et al. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and California Center for Public Health Advocacy. Nov. 2011. 8 p.

http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/research/patchworkdocs/OFT%20brief_final.pdf

"In California, more than one-third (38%) of fifth-, seventh-, and ninth-grade public school students were overweight or obese in 2010. This number represents a 1.1% decrease in the statewide prevalence of overweight and obesity from 2005, suggesting that the 30-year trend of increasing childhood obesity rates may be leveling off. However, overweight and obesity continue to be of major concern in the state, with more than half of California counties experiencing increases in rates of overweight and obesity among youth between 2005 and 2010." Among these counties, five had rates at least 10% higher in 2010 than in 2005: Yuba, Mariposa, Amador, Colusa, and Del Norte counties.

California Health Care Almanac: California Health Plans and Insurers. By California HealthCare Foundation. Nov. 2011. 46 p.

<http://www.chcf.org/~media/MEDIA%20LIBRARY%20Files/PDF/C/PDF%20CAHealthPlanInsurersAlmanac2011.pdf>

Five insurance carriers--Kaiser, Anthem Blue Cross, Health Net, Blue Shield and United Healthcare--accounted for 76% of the \$105 billion in revenues collected in 2010. Revenues grew faster for insurers regulated by CA Department of Insurance (CDI) compared to insurers under Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC). The six largest DMHC-regulated plans together lost more than 400,000 commercial enrollees. Although losses were smaller than in 2009, both group and individual enrollment declined. In contrast, Medi-Cal and Medicare managed care enrollment grew. Despite enrollment losses, most plans were profitable in 2010. Five of the six largest DMHC-regulated plans posted positive net income. All major CDI-regulated carriers operated in the black in 2010, in contrast to 2009.

Medicaid: The 800-Pound Gorilla. By Rachel Brand. National Conference of State Legislatures. Oct./Nov. 2011.

<http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=23689>

"The 46-year-old program, which cost state and federal governments nearly \$400 billion in 2009, eats about 16 cents of every dollar in state general funds. It's been growing two or three times faster than state budgets because of the rising costs of health care and the increasing number of people enrolling because of the stagnant economy. Meanwhile, state lawmakers are looking down the road three years to when an additional 16 million people will go onto the Medicaid rolls under federal health care reform. And while Congress debates possible modifications in how it funds the program, any changes remain uncertain."

HUMAN SERVICES

Young Adult Outcomes of Youth Exiting Dependent or Delinquent Care in Los Angeles County. By Dennis P. Culhane, et al. Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. Nov. 2011. 125 p.

http://www.hiltonfoundation.org/images/stories/Downloads/media_resources/Young_Adult_Outcomes_of_Youth_Exiting_Dependent_or_Delinquent_Care_in_LA_County_Report.pdf

Foster care youth in Los Angeles County are faring poorly under the current system and face severe challenges in education, employment, health, mental health and earnings potential. "Crossover youth," involved both in foster care and juvenile justice systems, currently average triple the per-person cost of public service dollars compared with foster care-only youth, providing compelling evidence that these young adults should be targeted with housing support, education, employment services and mentoring if the county and state are to avoid a lifetime of public dependence by this highly vulnerable population. (Hilton Foundation Press Release, Nov. 1, 2011).

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

California High-Speed Rail Program Draft 2012 Business Plan. California High-Speed Rail Authority. Nov. 1, 2011. 230 p.

<http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/assets/0/152/302/c7912c84-0180-4ded-b27e-d8e6aab2a9a1.pdf>

"The new business plan describes a phased approach to construction that will allow the Authority to adapt to changing financial conditions as it moves forward, segment by segment. The plan also updates cost estimates, ridership figures and funding expectations to reflect current economic realities.... The public will have 60 days to comment and help shape the final plan, which will be completed and provided to the Legislature in January 2012." (CHSRA Press Release, Nov. 1, 2011).

"Questions Raised on Bay Bridge Structural Tests." By Charles Piller. Sacramento Bee, Nov. 12, 2011.

<http://www.sacbee.com/2011/11/12/4050167/questions-raised-on-bay-bridge.html>

"A Bee investigation has found that the state Department of Transportation technician who conducted key testing to ensure structural integrity of the [San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge eastern] span's foundation was later disciplined for fabricating test results on other projects.... When Caltrans officials became aware of the problems with Wiles they did not thoroughly investigate his earlier work--despite public safety concerns raised by other test employees and an anonymous whistleblower.... Although Caltrans says the bridge is safe, The Bee's findings raise questions about its structural integrity that are not easy to answer."

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