

Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

Studies in the News is going on hiatus for the holidays.
We will resume on Wednesday, January 11, 2012.

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Policy Matters: State Survey of California Prisoners: What Percentage of the State's Polled Prison Inmates Were Once Foster Care Children? Senate Office of Research. Dec. 2011. 12 p.

http://www.sor.govoffice3.com/vertical/Sites/%7B3BDD1595-792B-4D20-8D44-626EF05648C7%7D/uploads/Foster_Care_PDF_12-8-11.pdf

A survey of inmates in California prisons revealed that 14% of all surveyed inmates had spent some part of their childhood in foster care. These inmates could be recognized as a special population by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in an effort to better serve this population. Prisons could

develop programs that address the needs of people raised in the foster care system. Prisons and parole programs could assist inmates who had been in foster care obtain services available to former foster youth. Finally, policymakers could “improve and develop new services for foster care teens who are trying to navigate their paths to independence.”

CULTURE & SOCIETY

Re-counting Poverty. By Jodie T. Allen. Pew Research Center. Nov. 30, 2011.
<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/11/30/re-counting-poverty/?src=prc-newsletter>

“The Census Bureau recently issued a new Supplemental Poverty Measure that uses a wider range of factors than the official measure to account for people's living expenses and their financial resources. The bureau's official measure set the 2010 poverty line for a two-adult, two-child family at \$22,113 while the supplemental measure sets it at \$24,343. Our backgrounder on the supplemental measure explores the history of the federal government's effort to measure poverty, why there was a need for an alternative measure, and how its methodology impacts different demographic groups.”

DEMOGRAPHY

U.S. Seniors Maintain Happiness Highs With Less Social Time. By Steve Crabtree. Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index. Dec. 12, 2011. 1 p.
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/151457/Seniors-Maintain-Happiness-Highs-Less-Social-Time.aspx>

“The more time Americans spend socially with family and friends, the more likely they are to report enjoyment and happiness in their lives without a lot of stress and worry.... The percentage of seniors reporting a lot of enjoyment and happiness without a lot of stress and worry increases more than 20 percentage points between those with no hours of social time the previous day and those with three hours. Among adults younger than 30, it takes more than six hours of social time to see as much of an increase in positive mood.”

ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT

Proposed Balance Budget Amendment is Extreme by International Standards. By Chye-Ching Huang, et al. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Dec. 6, 2011. 8 p.
<http://www.cbpp.org/files/12-6-11bud.pdf>

“The United States is an outlier in considering a constitutional balanced budget amendment. No other country has or is considering a rule that would prohibit countercyclical fiscal policy, and for very good reason: such a rule would worsen recessions, potentially causing ‘catastrophic’ economic damage in the words of Macroeconomic Advisers. Countries such as Germany have adopted or considered rules that have been called ‘balanced budget amendments,’ but those rules provide for fiscal policy to combat recessions and moderate boom-and-bust swings, and differ markedly from the amendment before the U.S. Senate.”

EDUCATION

Comparability of State and Local Expenditures Among Schools Within Districts: A Report From the Study of School-Level Expenditures. By Ruth Heuer, et al. U.S. Dept. of Education. Nov. 2011. 78 p.
<http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/title-i/school-level-expenditures/school-level-expenditures.pdf>

High poverty schools receive a lower share of school funding than more affluent schools. This pattern is seen nationally, across school districts with and without Title I schools. "Within districts that had both Title I and non-Title I schools, more than 40% of Title I schools had lower personnel expenditures per pupil than did non-Title I schools at the same school grade level....Similarly, more than one-third of higher-poverty schools had lower per-pupil personnel expenditures than lower-poverty schools in their districts. In addition, between 39 to 47% of Title I districts had lower per-pupil expenditures in their Title I schools than in their non-Title I schools at the same grade level."

ENERGY

Smart Grid Legislative and Regulatory Policies and Case Studies. Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). Energy Information Agency, United States Department of Energy. Dec. 2011. 48 p.

<http://www.eia.gov/analysis/studies/electricity/pdf/smartgrid.pdf>

"This report reviewed available legislation and/or regulation related to smart grid available in open source information for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Key findings are summarized with maps displaying the extent of legislative and regulatory actions. By mid-2011, more states are considering smart grid deployment incentives, customer savings and protection, and cyber security at the legislative level....The public outcry calling for smart meter alternatives earlier this year in California seems to have reverberated across the country regarding laws governing whether an 'optout' choice must be provided."

California's Energy Future - Transportation Energy Use in California. By Christopher Yang, et al. California Council on Science and Technology. Dec. 2011. 64 p.

<http://ccst.us/publications/2011/2011transportation.pdf>

"Total transportation energy demand could be reduced 30% relative to 2005 levels in 2050 through improving overall vehicle efficiency and the use of advanced electric drivetrains such as plug-in electric vehicles and fuel cell vehicles. Achieving high fleet penetration of efficient and alternatively fueled light-duty vehicles by 2050 will require rapid market adoption in the next decades and an expansion of efficiency policies to cover the entire range of transportation sectors, including aviation and marine."

HEALTH

Profits and Patients: The Financial Strength and Charitable Contributions of San Francisco Hospitals. Community Economic Development Clinic. University of California, Hastings College of the Law. Dec. 2011. 34 p.

<http://www.box.com/s/iyradudsj7dklimt66if>

Between 2006 and 2010, California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC) posted a net income of \$743.9 million compared to St. Mary's which posted a net income of \$22.6 million, and Saint Francis, which lost \$14.8 million. In 2010, CPMC's three oldest campuses (Davies, California, and Pacific) saw charity care patients at a patients-per-bed rate less than half that of Saint Francis, despite being more than 3 times the size of Saint Francis and having significantly greater financial stability. With approximately 99,000 patients seeking charity care and 130,945 patients relying on Medi-Cal, and an expectation that these numbers will grow, the need for all San Francisco private nonprofit hospitals to serve low-income San Francisco residents, at levels commensurate with their capacity and profitability, continues to be a significant public policy concern.

HOUSING

The New California Dream: How Demographic and Economic Trends May Shape the Housing Market. By Arthur C. Nelson. Urban Land Institute. Dec. 2011. 73 p.

<http://www.uli.org/ResearchAndPublications/~//media/ResearchAndPublications/Report/ULI%20Voices%20Nelson%20The%20New%20California%20Dream.ashx>

California has overbuilt in the area of large-lot single family homes. As the state's population changes and grows, there will be a rise in housing demand for smaller lots, multifamily units, and other "land use configurations consistent with transit-oriented compact development." To make this transition towards more sustainable communities, policy makers will need to address long-range planning around transit stations and revising zoning laws.

HUMAN SERVICES

Foster Children: HHS Guidance Could Help States Improve Oversight of Psychotropic Prescriptions. Statement of Gregory D. Kutz, Director, Forensic Audits and Investigative Service. United States Government Accountability Office (GAO). Dec. 1, 2011. 44 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d12270t.pdf>

Foster children in five selected states (Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Oregon, and Texas) were prescribed psychotropic drugs at higher rates (2.5 to 5.6 times higher) than nonfoster children in Medicaid during 2008. This could in part be due to foster children's greater mental health needs, exposure to traumatic experiences, and the challenges of coordinating their medical care. However, foster children were also more likely to be prescribed these drugs under conditions known to cause adverse health risks: the concomitant use of five or more psychotropic drugs, prescribing doses higher than the maximum recommended levels, and prescribing these drugs to children under one year of age. The states' monitoring programs all fell short of providing comprehensive oversight of psychotropic drugs prescribed to foster children.

INSURANCE

A Firm Foundation: How Insurance Supports the California Economy. Insurance Information Network of California. Nov. 2011. 56 p.

<http://iinc.org/attachments/CaliforniaFactBook2011.pdf>

California's property/casualty insurance industry is responsible for \$34.7 billion (1.8%) of the state's \$1.9 trillion economy in 2008. California also employed more than 287,000 workers, or nearly 10% of the nation's insurance workforce. Those jobs netted workers \$20 billion in 2009 compensation. In 2010, California property and casualty claims payments totaled \$29.4 billion. Life insurance claim and benefits payouts totaled almost \$38.9 billion last year. The state also collected \$2.2 billion in taxes from California insurers.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

The Annual William O. Lipinski Symposium on Transportation Policy: High Speed Rail: Perspectives and Prospects. November 14, 2011. Infrastructure Technology Institute. Northwestern University. Nov. 2011.

Symposium video and PowerPoint presentations available at

<http://iti.northwestern.edu/activities/lipinski/lipinski11.html>

More than a dozen politicians, policy makers, and experts spoke at the fifth annual transportation policy symposium, which focused on high speed rail. Speakers were divided, with some arguing high speed rail projects would create jobs, reduce carbon emissions, and alleviate congestion in a nation whose population is poised to grow dramatically in coming years. Others spoke against the projects, arguing they are costly, inefficient, unnecessary, and not as environmentally friendly as they are represented to be.

About *Studies in the News*

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