

Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Juvenile Justice Realignment in 2012. By Brian Heller de Leon, et al. Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice. Jan. 2012. 9 p.

http://www.cjcj.org/files/Juvenile_Justice_Realignment_2012.pdf

“The Division of Juvenile Facilities (DJF) budget triggers implemented on January 1, 2012, highlight the unsustainable costs of maintaining a dual juvenile justice system in California. DJF’s current recidivism rate of 80% and continued scrutiny under the Farrell lawsuit both demonstrate the limited success the state has at rehabilitating youthful offenders. This system should no longer be considered an appropriate or affordable use of California taxpayer dollars. A well-designed, phased juvenile justice realignment beginning in 2012 will strengthen the ability of counties to serve their most high-needs youth, enhance long-term public safety, and provide a fiscally responsible approach to juvenile justice in a time of great financial crisis.”

CULTURE & SOCIETY

Modest Recovery Largely Leaves Women Behind. National Women's Law Center. Jan. 6, 2012. 2 p. <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/modest-recovery-largely-leaves-women-behind>

"Although unemployment remains high and job growth unacceptably slow for both men and women, it is striking that women did not make any net gains until two and a half years into the recovery and their unemployment rate is higher than it was when the recovery began. During the recovery, women gained just 3% of the 1.4 million net jobs added to the economy [and] women's overall unemployment rate increased from 7.6% to 7.9% while men's dropped from 9.9% to 8.0%. Women's miniscule net gain in the recovery has been driven by the loss of public sector jobs – women lost 377,000 public sector jobs during the recovery."

ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT

Leveraging State Clean Energy Funds for Economic Development. By Lewis Milford, et al. Brookings-Rockefeller Project on State and Metropolitan Innovation. Jan. 2012. 16 p. http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2012/0111_states_energy_funds/0111_states_energy_funds.pdf

"State clean energy funds (CEFs) have emerged as effective tools that states can use to accelerate the development of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. These clean energy funds, which exist in over 20 states, generate about \$500 million per year in dedicated support from utility surcharges and other sources, making them significant public investors in thousands of clean energy projects. However, state clean energy funds' emphasis [is] on a project finance model." This report provides recommendations on how these CEFs can "become true economic development engines."

Transitions for the Delta Economy. By Josué Medellín-Azuara, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. Jan. 2012. Full Report. 64 p. http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_112EHR.pdf Technical Appendix. 26 p. http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/other/112EHR_appendix.pdf

"Enormous changes – from natural forces to management decisions – are coming to California's fragile Delta region, and will have broad effects on its residents." Preparing for transitions in the Delta economy is likely to be more fruitful than trying to fight change at all costs. Suggested planning priorities include creating a levee policy that focuses on the most important areas and assets; encouraging growth in recreation; conducting research to improve understanding of the effects of natural and managed change on Delta water quality; and developing mitigation strategies to assist affected landowners and communities.

EDUCATION

The Costs of Online Learning. By Tamara Butler Battaglini, et al. Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Jan. 2012. 14 p. <http://www.edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2012/20120110-the-costs-of-online-learning/20120110-the-costs-of-online-learning.pdf>

Researchers interviewed more than 50 vendors and experts in online education to determine the per-pupil cost of a variety of schooling models, including traditional and online, with nuanced analysis of variations in school design. Costs ranging "from \$5,100 to \$7,700 for full-time virtual schools, and \$7,600 to \$10,200 for the blended version...highlight both the potential for low-cost online schooling and the need for better data on costs and outcomes in order for policymakers to reach confident conclusions related to the productivity and efficiency of these promising new models."

ENERGY

September 9, 2010 PG&E Pipeline Rupture in San Bruno, CA. California Public Utilities Commission, Consumer Protection and Safety Division. Jan. 12, 2012. 176 p.

<http://cpuc.ca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/28720A78-1DC7-4474-B51F-00C5E8BB5069/0/AgendaStaffReportreOIIPGESanBrunoExplosion.pdf>

"[T]he Consumer Protection and Safety Division (CPSD) finds that PG&E violated the Public Utilities Code, several federal and state pipeline safety regulations and failed to follow accepted industry standards. The investigation revealed that the incident was caused by PG&E's failure to follow accepted industry practice when constructing the section of pipe that failed, PG&E's failure to comply with integrity management requirements, PG&E's inadequate record keeping practices, deficiencies in PG&E's SCADA system and inadequate procedures to handle emergencies and abnormal conditions, PG&E's deficient emergency response actions after the incident, and a systemic failure of PG&E's corporate culture to emphasize safety over profits."

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Sales Tax Add-Ons: A New Trend in Local Government Finance. By Meg Svoboda. Senate Office of Research. Jan. 2012. 4 p.

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

California currently has 132 Special Tax Jurisdictions (STJs), "which overall generate more than \$3.7 billion in revenue for local governments around the state. Of California's STJs, 93 are city-imposed sales tax add-ons and 39 are county-imposed sales tax add-ons." Since 2005, the number of STJs in California cities has nearly tripled.

HEALTH

"Competitive Food Sales in Schools and Childhood Obesity: A Longitudinal Study." By Jennifer Van Hook, et al. *Sociology of Education*, vol. 85, no. 1 (Jan. 2012) pp. 23-39.

<http://www.asanet.org/images/journals/docs/pdf/soe/Jan12SOEFeature.pdf>

Children's weight gain between fifth and eighth grades was not associated with the introduction or the duration of exposure to competitive food (soft drinks, candy bars, and chips) sales in middle school. Also, the relationship between competitive foods and weight gain did not vary significantly by gender, race/ethnicity, or family socioeconomic status. One possible explanation is that children's food preferences and dietary patterns are firmly established before adolescence. Also, middle school environments may dampen the effects of competitive food sales because they highly structure children's time and eating opportunities.

HOUSING

Balancing Risk and Access: Underwriting Standards for Qualified Residential Mortgages. By Roberto G. Quercia, et al. UNC Center for Community Capital and the Center for Responsible Lending. Jan. 2012. 47 p.

<http://www.responsiblelending.org/mortgage-lending/research-analysis/Underwriting-Standards-for-Qualified-Residential-Mortgages.pdf>

New federal underwriting guidelines for qualified residential mortgages may reduce the number of foreclosures, but they may also exclude – disproportionately – some creditworthy low-income or minority borrowers. Stricter down-payment and credit score rules are less effective because they exclude a larger share of borrowers in relation to percent of the defaults they prevent.

HUMAN SERVICES

Investing in Public Programs Matters: How State Policies Impact Children's Lives. 2012 STATE Child and Youth Well-Being Index. Foundation for Child Development. Jan. 2012. 15 p.

<http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/STATE%20CWI%20Report.pdf>

A strong relationship exists between children's well-being and state policies that drive public investments in programs for children and youth, according to the STATE CWI (Child Well-Being Index), a comprehensive index of 25 economic and demographic indicators of child well-being. In addition to ranking states by CWI, this study posits three key findings: higher state taxes are better for children; public investments in children matter; and a child's well-being is strongly related to the state where he or she lives, as the CWI varies tremendously from state to state.

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