



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

Issue 13-111

March 20, 2013

Contents this week:

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Most CA voters now support legalizing marijuana

ECONOMY

U.S. racial wealth gap driven by unequal wealth opportunities

EMPLOYMENT

Clean energy employment in 2012 experienced gains and setbacks

ENERGY

L.A. tops the nation in number of energy-efficient buildings

ENVIRONMENT

New evidence of the impact of climate change on agriculture

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

State worker leave balances after furloughs

HEALTH

Alcohol consumption linked to cancer

Alzheimer's disease affects more than 5.2 million Americans

HOUSING

How the recession has affected CA inclusionary housing

HUMAN SERVICES

The impacts of reduced TANF help for the needy

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Low-income housing: a 50-state comparison

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

The majority of "long commuters" do not carpool

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Support Legalizing the Sale of Marijuana in California. The Field Poll. Feb. 27, 2013. 6 p.

<http://field.com/fieldpollonline/subscribers/RIs2442.pdf>

Voter support for the legalization of marijuana continues to grow in California. "A 54% to 43% majority of California voters now support legalizing the sale of marijuana, with age and other controls like those applicable to alcohol." Bay Area voters showed the strongest support, while South Coast voters only show 47% favorability. Most voters (67%) are opposed to the federal crackdown on medical marijuana dispensaries, though only 58% would favor allowing dispensaries to operate in their city or town.

ECONOMY

The Roots of the Widening Racial Wealth Gap: Explaining the Black-White Economic Divide.

By Thomas Shapiro, et al. IASP: Institute on Assets and Social Policy. Feb. 2013. 8 p.

<http://iasp.brandeis.edu/pdfs/Author/shapiro-thomas-m/racialwealthgapbrief.pdf>

“Growing concerns about wealth inequality and the expanding racial wealth gap have ... become central to the debate over whether our nation is on a sustainable economic path. This report provides critical new information about what has fueled the racial wealth gap.... Key findings include: the biggest drivers of the growing racial wealth gap are: years of homeownership; household income; a college education; inheritance, financial support by families or friends, and preexisting family wealth; and, equal achievements, such as income gains, yield unequal wealth rewards for whites and African-Americans.” The brief includes public policy recommendations to close the racial wealth gap.

EMPLOYMENT

2012 Clean Energy Jobs Year-in-Review and Fourth Quarter Report. Environmental Entrepreneurs. Mar. 2013. 12 p.

<http://www.e2.org/ext/doc/E2CleanEnergy2012YearEndandQ4.pdf>

“More than 110,000 clean energy jobs could be created based on the 300-plus clean energy and clean transportation announcements tracked by E2 last year. These jobs were announced in every clean energy sector and in every region of the country.... Despite 2012’s gains, there were setbacks for the sector late in the year. Specifically, E2 tracked about 2,000 fewer jobs in the fourth quarter in all non-public transportation sectors when compared to the third quarter. E2 also found a sharp fourth-quarter drop in wind energy manufacturing job announcements due to regulatory uncertainty in Washington.”

ENERGY

Top Cities with the Most ENERGY STAR Certified Buildings in 2012. Environmental Protection Agency. Mar. 13, 2013. 1 p.

http://www.energystar.gov/ia/business/downloads/Top_Cities_chart.pdf

“The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a list of U.S. metropolitan areas with the most Energy Star certified buildings in 2012, highlighting how owners and managers of commercial buildings across the country are taking action on climate change while delivering real financial savings to the bottom line.... For the fifth year in a row, Los Angeles continues to hold on to first place, with 528 buildings.... Commercial buildings that earn EPA’s Energy Star must perform in the top 25% of similar buildings nationwide.”

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Impacts on Agriculture: A Challenge to Complacency? By Frank Ackerman, et al. Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University. Feb. 2013. 17 p.

<http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/Pubs/wp/13-01AckermanClimateImpacts.pdf>

Early research supported the conclusion that – at least initially – climate change would improve agricultural yields. The primary mechanism for this was due to carbon fertilization and longer growing seasons. However, this position is increasingly being challenged by further research. Carbon fertilization

effects may have been over-estimated. Thresholds can impact how temperature affects crop yield. Climate change not only increases the growing season but can dramatically alter precipitation patterns with uncertain effects on agricultural production.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***After Furloughs: State Workers' Leave Balances.* Legislative Analyst's Office. Mar. 14, 2013. 28 p.**
<http://www.lao.ca.gov/laoapp/PubDetails.aspx?id=2702>

"Over the past five budget years, furloughs reduced state employee compensation costs by about \$5 billion in exchange for giving state employees additional time off. This report examines whether state employees took this additional time off – or whether, after accounting for changes in use of vacation and other time, they worked about as many days as they did before."

HEALTH

"Alcohol-Attributable Cancer Deaths and Years of Potential Life Lost in the United States."
By David E. Nelson, et al. *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 103 no. 4 (Apr. 2013), pp. 641-648.
<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.2012.301199>

"Previous studies have shown that alcohol consumption is a significant risk factor for cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus and liver. More recent research has shown that alcohol also increases the risk of cancers of the colon, rectum and female breast. While estimates have shown that alcohol accounts for about 4% of all cancer-related deaths worldwide, there is a lack of literature focusing on cancer-related deaths in the U.S.... The researchers also found that each alcohol-related cancer death accounted for an average of 18 years of potential life lost." (*The Insider*, Boston University School of Public Health, Feb. 15, 2013).

***2013 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures.* Alzheimer's Association. Mar. 2013. 72 p.**
http://www.alz.org/downloads/facts_figures_2013.pdf

"An estimated 5.2 million Americans of all ages have Alzheimer's disease in 2013. This includes an estimated 5 million people age 65 and older and approximately 200,000 individuals under age 65 who have younger-onset Alzheimer's." This study explores the public health impacts and costs of Alzheimer's, and notes that the rise in cases of death attributed to Alzheimer's is partly due to greater public awareness of the physical repercussions of this disease.

HOUSING

***After the Downturn: New Challenges and Opportunities for Inclusionary Housing.* By Robert Hickey. Center for Housing Policy. Feb. 2013. 20 p.**
<http://www.nhc.org/media/files/InclusionaryReport201302.pdf>

Inclusionary policies require housing developers to include a certain amount of affordable housing within new developments. Throughout the U.S., these policies have remained fairly secure, despite the recession. However, in California, due to the elimination of redevelopment agencies, a support system for inclusionary policies in redevelopment areas, and a court decision (*Palmer v. City of LA*) eliminating the requirement for inclusionary policies in rental developments, the current and future state of inclusionary housing is unclear.

HUMAN SERVICES

Post-Welfare Reform Trends Plus Deeper Spending Cuts Could Equal Disaster for the Nation's Poor. By Joy Moses. Center for American Progress. Feb. 7, 2013. 8 p.

<http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/WelfareReformSpendingBrief.pdf>

“Spending cuts, especially those targeting the poor, are a significant cause of concern, given the current state of poverty in America. In this post-welfare-reform era, many families continue to struggle – single-mother poverty and deep poverty have been on the rise over the past several years, and the ranks of the working poor have remained stubbornly large. These families are no longer getting much help from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, and they greatly depend on other services offered by the government. Cutting those services would produce dire circumstances for families and children. Further spending cuts must therefore be prevented as a part of sequestration and beyond.”

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Out of Reach 2013. By Elina Bravve, et al. National Low Income Housing Coalition. Mar. 11, 2013.

<http://nlihc.org/oor/2013>

California is the second-most costly state for renters. In California, workers earning the state's \$8-an-hour minimum wage must work 129 hours a week in order to spend less than 30% of their income on a two-bedroom unit. To see how California fares against other states, see the link above for state rankings.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Out-of-State and Long Commutes: 2011. By Brian McKenzie. U.S. Census Bureau. Feb. 2013. 11 p.

https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/pdf/acs_20_out_of_state_and_long_commutes_report.pdf

“This report uses 2011 ACS [American Community Survey] data at the state level to explore two commuting indicators related to travel time and work location: (1) the percentage of commuters with long commutes (commutes of 60 minutes or longer) and (2) the percentage of workers who work outside of their state of residence.” Among the findings, this study shows that, in 2011, approximately 61% of workers with “long commutes” drove to work alone, and over 8% of U.S. workers had commutes of 60 minutes or longer.

About *Studies in the News*

Studies in the News (SITN) is a service provided by the California Research Bureau (CRB), a division of the California State Library. CRB provides independent, nonpartisan research and analysis for the Governor, Legislature and State Constitutional Officers.

- SITN lists of current studies related to public policy issues are e-mailed weekly. Archived issues are available at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb>.
- To add or remove your name from the SITN distribution list, or to update your e-mail address, please contact us at crb@library.ca.gov, or (916) 319-2691.
- SITN is available as an RSS feed at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb/>.