



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Realignment Report: A One-Year Examination of Offenders Released from State Prison in the First Six Months of Public Safety Realignment. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. May 2013. 31 p.

<http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/realignment/>

"The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) now has one year of data to evaluate how offenders released from prison during the first six months after October 1, 2011, have fared on parole and PRCS [Post-release Community Supervision].... Overall, this report shows that there is

very little difference between offenders and their outcomes following release after completing their State prison term pre- and post-Realignment. While the sheer number of offenders being processed did decline, the rates of the different outcomes are all fairly similar as are the demographic characteristics.... The only exception to this is for returns to prison, which is to be expected since Realignment fundamentally changed the types of offenses and offenders that can be returned to prison.”

ECONOMY

Advantage America: The U.S.-China Clean Energy Technology Trade Relationship in 2011.
Pew Charitable Trusts. Mar. 6, 2013. 36 p.

<http://www.pewenvironment.org/uploadedFiles/PEG/Publications/Report/US-China-Report-FINAL.pdf>

“The United States and China traded more than \$8.5 billion in clean energy goods and services in 2011, but U.S. companies had a \$1.6 billion sales advantage over China. Although most sales for both countries came from the solar energy sector, the U.S. saw a trade surplus in wind energy and ‘energy smart’ technologies such as batteries and smart meters.” (*Pew News Now*, March 6, 2013),

EDUCATION

Experimental Evidence on the Effects of Home Computers on Academic Achievement Among Schoolchildren. By Robert W. Fairlie, et al. **National Poverty Center Working Paper Series. #13-02. Feb. 2013. 43 p.**

<http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED539512.pdf>

“Computers are an important part of modern education, yet large segments of the population – especially low-income and minority children – lack access to a computer at home. Does this impede educational achievement? We test this hypothesis by conducting the largest-ever field experiment involving the random provision of free computers for home use to students. 1,123 schoolchildren grades 6-10 in 15 California schools participated in the experiment. Although the program significantly increased computer ownership and use, we find no effects on any educational outcomes, including grades, standardized test scores, credits earned, attendance and disciplinary actions. Our estimates are precise enough to rule out even modestly-sized positive or negative impacts. The estimated null effect is consistent with survey evidence showing no change in homework time or other ‘intermediate’ inputs in education for treatment students.”

Bridging the Higher Education Divide: Strengthening Community Colleges and Restoring the American Dream. The Century Foundation. **May 2013. 83 p.**

http://tcf.org/assets/downloads/20130523-Bridging_the_Higher_Education_Divide-REPORT-ONLY.pdf

This report explores the growing socioeconomic divide between public community colleges and other higher education institutions. “A central problem is that two-year colleges are asked to educate those students with the greatest needs, using the least funds, and in increasingly separate and unequal institutions. Our higher education system, like the larger society, is growing more and more unequal. We need radical innovations that redesign institutions and provide necessary funding tied to performance.” Among the recommendations: create new, outcomes-based funding in higher education; provide additional public supports based on student needs; and adopt public policies to reduce racial and socioeconomic stratification in U.S. colleges.

EMPLOYMENT

***Making Jobs Good.* By John Schmitt, et al. Center for Economic and Policy Research. Apr. 2013. 15 p.**

<http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/good-jobs-policy-2013-04.pdf>

“[A] good job [is] one that (1) pays at least \$19 per hour (in constant 2011 dollars) and (2) has employer-provided health insurance and (3) has some kind of retirement plan (either a traditional pension or a 401(k)-style plan).... For all workers, the share in good jobs fell from 27.4% in 1979 to 24.1% in 2011.... This report turns to possible solutions by evaluating the likely impact of several policies that seek to address job quality, including: universal health insurance, a universal retirement system (over and above Social Security), a large increase in college attainment, a large increase in unionization, and gender pay equity.”

ENVIRONMENT

***An Interpretation of the Origins of the 2012 Central Great Plains Drought.* By Martin Hoerling, et al. NOAA Drought Task Force. Mar. 20, 2013. 50 p.**

<http://drought.gov/drought/content/drought-task-force-report-page>

The 2012 drought that hit much of the Midwest was one of the most severe droughts ever recorded in the region, with rainfall deficits worse than those experienced during the 1934 and 1936 Dust Bowl droughts. In addition, extremely high temperatures co-occurred with the precipitation deficits, causing substantial impacts to the region's ecology. Although climate change was commonly pointed to as a cause in popular media, an analysis of the drought found the proximate cause to be the failure of warm moist air from the Gulf of Mexico to move northward in the late spring. Climate change, therefore, was not identified as a significant contributing factor to the 2012 drought.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***The 2013-2014 Budget: Overview of the May Revision.* Legislative Analyst's Office. May 17, 2013. 40 p.**

<http://www.lao.ca.gov/reports/2013/bud/may-revise/overview-may-revise-051713.pdf>

“[O]ur [revenue] forecast now is \$3.2 billion higher than the administration's May Revision total for 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14 combined.... After years of 'boom and bust' budgeting, California's leaders now have the opportunity to build a budget for future years that gives the state more choices about how to build reserves in times of healthy revenue growth, prioritize future state spending, and pay off past debts. Given the improved fiscal forecast, we believe this is an ideal time for the Legislature to begin addressing its huge budgetary and retirement liabilities.”

HEALTH

All Over the Map: Elective Procedure Rates in California Vary Widely. California Healthcare Foundation. May 2013.

Research Summary. 12 p.:

<http://www.chcf.org/~media/MEDIA%20LIBRARY%20Files/PDF/V/PDF%20VariationResearchSummary2013.pdf>

Interactive map and supporting documents: http://www.chcf.org/publications/2013/05/medical-variation-map#6/36.985/-119.443&procedure=lura_123®ion=hsa

“As this study shows, one of the best predictors of undergoing many elective treatments and tests is the community in which a patient resides and the prevailing medical practices of clinicians in that community. This research summary highlights geographic variation in the rates at which certain elective procedures and tests are performed in different communities in California.” CHCF has produced special reports on the geographic variation in elective childbirth procedures, weight loss surgery and prostate cancer screening, among others.

HUMAN SERVICES

A Fair Chance: Why California Should Invest in Economic Opportunity for Women and Their Families. California Budget Project. Mar. 2013. 38 p.

<http://womensfoundca.org/sites/default/files/a-fair-chance.pdf>

[This report shows that] women are not sharing equally in the state’s emerging economic recovery and that recent cuts to key public services and systems threaten pathways to economic opportunity for women – especially low-income women.... Subsidized child care and preschool programs are especially important for low-income women, given that child care is one of the most expensive items in a household budget. In 2011, in Los Angeles County, full-time care for an infant in a child care center was, on average, \$11,499 annually. When women struggle to afford child care, it presents one additional barrier to securing employment.” (*California Budget Bites*, Mar. 26, 2013).

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

A Web-Based Pavement Performance and Maintenance Management and GIS Mapping System for Easy Access to Pavement Condition Information: Final Report. By Zhanmin Zhang, et al.

Center for Transportation Research, University of Texas at Austin. May 2013. 15 p.

<http://library.ctr.utexas.edu/ctr-publications/5-9035-01-P1.pdf>

“State Departments of Transportation, including the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), have long been moving towards the development and implementation of pavement management systems that would enable monitoring of the performance of their roadways, as well as assist transportation officials with maintenance, budget allocation and planning decisions.... This report presents a new approach to the development of such a decision-support system with its focus on maintenance management for TxDOT. The new system is web-based and provides functional capabilities that allow transportation officials and engineers to make informed decisions regarding their budget planning and budget allocation for pavement maintenance management, fully utilizing available historical data.”

VETERANS SERVICES

Report on VA Facility Specific Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) Veterans Coded with Potential PTSD. Cumulative from 1st Qtr FY 2002 through 1st Qtr FY 2013 (October 1, 2001–December 31, 2012). Epidemiology Program, Post Deployment Health Group, Office of Public Health, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs. Mar. 2013. 10 p.

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/docs/epidemiology/ptsd-report-fy2013-qtr1.pdf>

Veterans Health Administration health care utilization databases show that a cumulative total of 286,134 OEF/OIF/OND veterans have been diagnosed or treated for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder at least once at a VA medical center, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) or Veterans Center. This represents 17.9% of the military personnel who have separated from active duty following a deployment during 2002-2012. These numbers include 34,662 veterans diagnosed or treated in California facilities in VISN 21 and VISN 22.

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