



## Studies in the News

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## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT**

*Public Safety Realignment and Crime Rates in California.* By Magnus Lofstrom, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. Dec. 2013.

Full Report. 24 p.: [http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R\\_1213MLR.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_1213MLR.pdf)

Technical Appendix. 24 p.: [http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/other/1213MLR\\_appendix.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/other/1213MLR_appendix.pdf)

As a result of prison realignment in California, about 18,000 offenders have been doing “street time” (i.e., not serving their time in prison or jails, as in years past), which has raised serious concerns about crime in the state. This report states that between 2011 and 2012, the violent crime rate increased 3.2% and property crime rose to 7.6%. However, the overall crime rate in California remained at historically low levels and no evidence was found that realignment affected the number of murders or rapes. The authors

did find, however, that there was “robust evidence” that realignment was related to an increase in property crime.

## ECONOMY

***Econometric Estimates of the Effects of NAFTA: A Review of the Literature.*** By Justino De La Cruz, et al. U.S. International Trade Commission, Office of Economics. No. 2013-12A. Dec. 2013. 14 p.

[http://www.usitc.gov/publications/332/working\\_papers/EC201312A.pdf](http://www.usitc.gov/publications/332/working_papers/EC201312A.pdf)

“This paper reviews a series of econometric studies of the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA] on the economies of Mexico, Canada, and the United States. It highlights eleven papers from the last decade that vary in the economic outcomes analyzed (trade flows, wages, employment, productivity, investment, and income in one or more of the countries) and in the statistical methodologies and types of data that are utilized.” Since the ratification of NAFTA in 1994, the “literature has grown significantly ... and now there is a large body of evidence—but no consensus—about the economic effects of NAFTA on the three countries.”

## EDUCATION

***A Generation Later: What We've Learned about Zero Tolerance in Schools.*** By Jacob Kang-Brown, et al. Vera Institute of Justice. Dec. 2013. 10 p.

[www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/zero-tolerance-in-schools-policy-brief.pdf](http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/zero-tolerance-in-schools-policy-brief.pdf)

This report “looks at existing research about whether zero tolerance discipline policies make schools more orderly or safe, if out-of-school suspension or expulsion leads to greater involvement in the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems, and what effect these policies can have on a young person’s future. It concludes that, a generation after the rise of these policies and practices, neither schools nor young people have benefited.”

## EMPLOYMENT

***Women Workers and Unions.*** By John Schmitt, et al. Center for Economic and Policy Research. Dec. 2013. 4 p.

<http://www.cepr.net/publications/reports/women-workers-and-unions>

“This issue brief looks at the most recent national data available to examine the impact that being in or represented by a union has on the wages and benefits of women in the paid workforce. Even after controlling for factors such as age, race, industry, educational attainment and state of residence, the data show a substantial boost in pay and benefits for female workers in unions relative to their non-union counterparts. The effect is particularly strong for women with lower levels of formal education.”

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***The Emergence of Civic Tech: Investments in a Growing Field.*** By Mayur Patel, et al. Knight Foundation. Dec. 2013. 30 p.

[http://www.knightfoundation.org/media/uploads/publication\\_pdfs/knight-civic-tech.pdf](http://www.knightfoundation.org/media/uploads/publication_pdfs/knight-civic-tech.pdf)

The connection between technology, civic innovation, open government and resident engagement is what defines “civic tech.” The most mature organizations behind these innovations (5-7 years old) are focused

on voting, public decision making and visualization/mapping. The “youngest” areas of innovation are in “resident feedback and voting.” Much of the investment in these organizations comes from philanthropic grants, so there is room to grow for more private investment.

## HEALTH

**“Health Benefits of Reducing Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Intake in High Risk Populations of California: Results from the Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) Policy Model.”** By Tekeshe A. Mekonnen, et al. *PLoS ONE*, vol. 8, no. 12 (Dec. 2013) 9 p.

<http://www.plosone.org/article/fetchObject.action?uri=info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0081723&representation=PDF>

“A statewide penny-an-ounce tax on sugary drinks could save hundreds of millions in health care costs and reduce the number of new diabetes cases by thousands, a new study shows.... The study's authors tailored a national cardiovascular disease model to California, and then projected the impacts the proposal, leaving out diet drinks and 100% juices. The model showed that with a rise in prices, statewide consumption declines from 10 to 20%. That decreased caloric intake led to health care savings from decreased blood pressure, body weight and incidents of diabetes—up to 23,000 fewer new cases.” (*Santa Cruz Sentinel*, Jan. 2, 2014).

## HOUSING

***Department of Fair Employment and Housing: Underfunding and Misguided Policies Compromise Civil Rights Mission.*** By Dorothy Korber, et al. California Senate Office of Oversight and Outcomes. Dec. 18, 2013. 99 p.

<http://sooo.senate.ca.gov/sites/sooo.senate.ca.gov/files/fair%20employment%20and%20housing%20final.pdf>

The results of this study find that the [California] Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has lost its ability to effectively investigate fair employment and housing discrimination claims, due to “dwindling resources and poor policy choices” that “have compromised the department’s investigations—including a procedure that allows the governor to veto any claim against a public agency.” Researchers recommend that the legislature increase funding for the agency, or “amend the law to reflect a more modest mission,” and end the practice of treating discrimination claims made by public employees differently than those made by the private sector.

## HUMAN SERVICES

***Poverty in the Golden State: Where California Stands 50 Years Since the War on Poverty Began.*** California Budget Project. Jan. 7, 2014. 3 p.

[http://www.cbp.org/pdfs/2014/140107\\_Poverty\\_in\\_the\\_Golden\\_State\\_BB.pdf](http://www.cbp.org/pdfs/2014/140107_Poverty_in_the_Golden_State_BB.pdf)

“The social safety net plays a critical role in keeping Californians out of poverty. According to the US Census Bureau, safety-net programs on average kept nearly 4 million Californians, including 1 million children, out of poverty between 2009 and 2011.... [However,] many Californians nonetheless are struggling in the aftermath of the Great Recession.... Poverty in California is nearly one-third higher now than before the Great Recession. Nearly 16% of Californians—more than 6 million people—had incomes below the federal poverty line in 2012, compared to 12.2% in 2006, the last year before the recession began.”

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

**Maternal and Infant Health Assessment. California Department of Public Health. 2013.**

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/data/surveys/MIHA/Pages/MaternalandInfantHealthAssessment%28MIHA%29survey.aspx>

“The Maternal and Infant Health Assessment, or MIHA, is an annual, statewide-representative survey of women with a recent live birth in California. MIHA collects self-reported information about maternal and infant experiences and about maternal attitudes and behaviors before, during and shortly after pregnancy.” The link provides tools to create tables and maps comparing key maternal and infant health indicators across geographic and demographic characteristics.

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***The Exposition Light Rail Line Study: A Before-and-After Study of the Impact of New Light Rail Transit Service.* By Marlon G. Boarnet, et al. Sol Price School of Public Policy, University of Southern California. Dec. 2013. 72 p.**

<http://priceschool.usc.edu/expo-line-study/>

“Los Angeles has made a substantial commitment to rail transit, but several policy questions continue to be debated. Among those questions, possibly the most basic is whether new transportation options will change travel modes, and whether Angelenos will modify their travel as new options become available... We find evidence that ... the Expo Line is associated with travel behavior change, and we can infer that the association reflects a causal effect of the Expo Line on household travel... [T]he fact that the Expo Line has changed travel behavior suggests that the rail service is valued by nearby residents. That value will likely be reflected in land prices and land uses in later years, which will lead to broader social and economic impact around the rail transit lines.”

## VETERANS

***Understanding the Cost and Quality of Military-Related Education Benefit Programs.* By Paco Martorell, et al. RAND. Dec. 23, 2013.**

**Full Report. 43 p.:**

[http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR200/RR297/RAND\\_RR297.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR200/RR297/RAND_RR297.pdf)

**Summary. 8 p.:**

[http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR200/RR297/RAND\\_RR297.sum.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR200/RR297/RAND_RR297.sum.pdf)

“The Post-9/11 GI Bill offers tuition subsidies paid directly to institutions, a housing allowance tied to cost of living, and a book stipend, which in combination are usually more generous than preceding GI Bills. However, issues such as ... an increasing presence of low-quality, for-profit institutions that target veterans; and a potentially confusing array of benefit options could mitigate the impact of these programs.... This report contextualizes these issues and formulates a research agenda to address them.”

### **About *Studies in the News***

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