



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

The 2014-15 Budget: Administration's Response to Prison Overcrowding Order.
Legislative Analyst's Office. Feb. 28, 2014. 20 p.

<http://www.lao.ca.gov/reports/2014/budget/three-judge-panel/three-judge-panel-022814.pdf>

"Our analysis indicates that the administration's plan is likely to achieve compliance with the court-ordered population cap in the short run. However, we find that the plan is very costly and may not be able to maintain compliance with the cap in the long run.... [W]e recommend using a portion of the monies in

the Recidivism Reduction Fund to evaluate CDCR's [California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation] current rehabilitative programs and to expand an existing grant program that incentivizes counties to reduce prison admissions. In addition, we recommend that the Legislature focus on adopting policies that would (1) ensure that the state will not exceed the court-ordered population cap in the future and (2) reduce the number of contract beds necessary to maintain compliance with the cap."

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***More Hate Crimes Motivated by Victims' Ethnicity.* By Bruce Drake. Pew Research Center. Feb. 21, 2014. 1 p.**

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/02/21/more-hate-crimes-motivated-by-victims-ethnicity/>

"Motivations behind hate crimes have shifted significantly in recent years, with the biggest jump in hate crimes that, according to the victims, were based on ethnicity bias. Ethnicity, defined as a victim's 'ancestral, cultural, social or national affiliation,' was cited as a reason in 51% of cases reported in 2012, up from 30% in 2011.... [T]he percentage of hate crimes where the perceived cause was religious bias nearly tripled—from 10% in 2004 to 28% in 2012. Over the same period, the percentage of hate crimes rooted in gender bias more than doubled, from 12% to 26%.... Hate crimes in which race and sexual orientation were cited showed a decline between 2004 and 2012, from 58% to 46%, while hate crimes motivated by a person's disability remained about the same (11%)."

ECONOMY

***The Increasingly Unequal States of America: Income Inequality by State, 1917 to 2011.* By Estelle Sommeiller, et al. Economic Analysis and Research Network. Feb. 19, 2014. 31 p.**

<http://s2.epi.org/files/2014/Income-Inequality-by-State-Final.pdf>

"[T]his report examines how the top 1% in each state have fared over 1917-2011, with an emphasis on trends over 1928-2011.... In so doing, this analysis finds that all 50 states have experienced widening income inequality in recent decades. Specific findings include: Between 1979 and 2007, the top 1% took home well over half (53.9%) of the total increase in U.S. income.... Lopsided income growth characterizes every states between 1979 and 2007 ... Data for individual states (available only through 2011) show that rising inequality has again become a pervasive trend: Between 2009 and 2011, in 33 states the top 1% captured between half and all income growth."

EDUCATION

***States Address Concerns about Concussions in Youth Sports.* By Carol Kreck. Education Commission of the States. Mar. 2014. 5 p.**

www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/11/61/11161.pdf

"ECS reviewed legislation in the 50 states to see how state leaders are responding to concerns about concussions in youth sports.... About half the state laws require coaches to complete a concussion management training program, while 80% require coaches get information on recognizing concussions. Thirteen states extend concussion law requirements to private entities, such as private schools or youth athletic leagues, in addition to public schools. Twelve states offer immunity from civil liability to school districts and employees, officials, volunteers or medical personnel; six don't create or modify liability.... California extended concussion provisions to students in charter and private schools."

EMPLOYMENT

***Minimum Wage Legislation 2014.* National Conference of State Legislatures. Feb. 2014. 1 p.**
<http://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/minimum-wage-legislation-2014.aspx>

“Minimum wage continues to be a hot issue in the states for the 2014 legislative session. As of the 24th of February, 32 states and D.C. are considering minimum wage bills, including 29 states where there are bills calling for increases to the state minimum wage.” This webpage and associated links cover state-by-state minimum wages. It links to a collection of 2013 and 2014 legislation that includes where each bill is in the legislative process.

ENERGY

“Methane Leaks from North American Natural Gas Systems.” By A.R. Brandt, et al. *Science*, vol. 343 (Feb. 14, 2014) pp. 733-735.
<http://www.novim.org/images/pdf/ScienceMethane.02.14.14.pdf>

“According to a comprehensive assessment of more than 200 studies, methane leaks from the production of natural gas negates its benefits and can actually do more harm to the planet. Although burning natural gas produces 30% less carbon-dioxide compared to burning diesel, the drilling and production of natural gas can lead to leaks of methane, a greenhouse gas 30 times more destructive than carbon dioxide. The study concludes that there is already about 50% more methane in the atmosphere than previously estimated by the Environmental Protection Agency.” (*The Daily Energy Report*, Mar. 14, 2014).

ENVIRONMENT

Paying for Water in California. By Ellen Hanak, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. Mar. 2014. 81 p.
<http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=1086>

“California faces critical funding gaps in five key areas of water management....These areas include safe drinking water in small, disadvantaged communities; flood protection; management of stormwater and other polluted runoff; aquatic ecosystem management; and integrated water management.... The report identifies the overall funding gap in these five areas at \$2 billion to \$3 billion annually. Filling this gap would require a spending increase of 7–10%—or \$150 to \$230 per household—for a water system with annual spending of more than \$30 billion.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Subsidizing the Corporate One Percent: Subsidy Tracker 2.0 Reveals Big-Business Dominance of State and Local Development Incentives. By Philip Mattera. Good Jobs First. Feb. 2014. 6 p.
<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/subsidizingthecorporateonepercent.pdf>

Data shows a very high concentration of state and local economic development awards going to big business. It is estimated that 75% of “cumulative disclosed subsidy dollars” has gone to 965 large corporations. The largest recipient of these awards is Boeing, at \$13 billion. Dow Chemical, at 416, is the company with the largest number of awards.

HEALTH

Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Dec. 2013.

Report. 1,016 p.: <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Report-to-Congress-on-the-Prevention-and-Reduction-of-Underage-Drinking-2013/PEP13-RTCUD>

State-by-State Information. 4 p.:

<https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/resources/reporttocongress/RTC2013.aspx>

“Alcohol continues to be the most widely used substance of abuse among America’s youth, and a higher proportion use alcohol than use tobacco or other drugs. For example ... 27.2% of 10th graders reported using alcohol in the past 30 days, 17.6% reported marijuana use, and 11.8% reported cigarette use in the same period.” This report gives comprehensive data on underage drinking and on state efforts to reduce and eliminate it. In California, 22.1% of youth age 15-17 reported alcohol use in the past 30 days.

HUMAN SERVICES

Food Assistance Landscape: FY 2013 Annual Report. By Victor Oliveira. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Feb. 2014. 21 p.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/ersDownloadHandler.ashx?file=/media/1282272/eib120.pdf>

“About 1 in 4 Americans participates in at least 1 of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) 15 domestic food and nutrition assistance programs at some point during the year.... These programs account for over 70% of USDA’s annual budget. USDA’s Economic Research Service (ERS) conducts studies and evaluations of these programs.” Findings include: (1) Food assistance expenditures increased slightly; (2) Rate of growth in SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] participation slowed; (3) WIC [Women, Infants, and Children] participation shrank; (4) Participation in the National School Lunch Program fell, while expenditures increased; (5) Participation in the School Breakfast Program increased slightly; and (6) Child and Adult Care Food Program expanded slightly.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

A New Course: How Innovative University Programs Are Reducing Driving on Campus and Creating New Models for Transportation. By Tom Van Heeke, et al. U.S. PIRG Education Fund. Feb. 2014. 43 p.

http://uspirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/US_A_New_Course_scrn_0.pdf

“Colleges and universities across the United States use a wide variety of strategies to reduce the number of cars around campus. Some build more residence halls on campus to increase the number of students living within walking distance of their classes. Many schools make changes to their transportation policies and infrastructure by improving public transportation, supporting bikesharing, ridesharing and carsharing programs, and constructing bike lanes and pedestrian paths to create viable alternatives to car ownership and use for university communities. Many of the most successful colleges combine these strategies and extend participation to the community at large—helping universities to become part of the transportation solution for the communities in which they reside, rather than a source of transportation problems.”

VETERANS

VA Health Care: Actions Needed to Improve Administration and Oversight of Veterans' Millennium Act Emergency Care Benefit. Government Accountability Office. GAO-14-175. Mar. 2014. 65 p.
<http://gao.gov/assets/670/661404.pdf>

“GAO identified a number of instances where VA staff who processed claims did not comply with applicable requirements of the Millennium Act, its implementing regulations, or VA policies when they denied the claims.... GAO recommends that VA take a number of actions, including steps to ensure facilities comply with applicable requirements, notify veterans of denials, improve oversight of claims processing, and collect better data on denials and veterans' understanding of eligibility for Millennium Act coverage.”

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