



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

A New Approach to Reducing Incarceration While Maintaining Low Rates of Crime. By Steven Raphael, et al. Hamilton Project. May 2014.

Full Report. 36 p.:

http://www.hamiltonproject.org/files/downloads_and_links/v5_THP_RaphaelStoll_DiscPaper.pdf

Policy Brief. 8 p.:

http://www.hamiltonproject.org/files/downloads_and_links/v5_THP_RaphelStollBrief.pdf

“Based on recent research and the experiences of several states ... there is substantial room to reduce incarceration rates in the United States without adversely impacting crime rates.... We propose that states introduce a greater degree of discretion into their sentencing and parole practices through two specific reforms: (1) a reduction in the scope and severity of truth-in-sentencing laws that mandate that inmates serve minimum proportions of their sentences, and (2) a reworking and, in many instances, abandonment of mandatory minimum sentences.”

ECONOMY

Europe and the Bay Area: Investing in Each Other. By Sean Randolph, et al. Bay Area Council Economic Institute. Apr. 14, 2014. 68 p.

<http://documents.bayareacouncil.org/eubareport.pdf>

This report reviews the influence of Europe in the Bay Area’s economy, provides a historical perspective between the two regions dating back to the Gold Rush, and illustrates the mutually beneficial rewards resulting from this relationship. Europe remains an important trade partner, accounting for exports totaling \$9.2 billion in 2012. Europe is the largest global investor in the area, accounting for one-third of all foreign companies in the region. With a total of nearly 12,800 patents co-registered by Bay Area and European inventors, Europe accounts for 39% of all Bay Area patents registered with foreign partners since 1999.

EDUCATION

Looking at the Best Teachers and Who They Teach: Poor Students and Students of Color are Less Likely to Get Highly Effective Teaching. By Jenny DeMonte, et al. Center for American Progress. Apr. 11, 2014. 7 p.

www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/TeacherDistributionBrief1.pdf

“In an analysis of the newest data, we find that in some areas, poor students and students of color are far less likely than others to have expert teachers.... In the past five years, the definition of teacher effectiveness has undergone a shift from being based on credentials and years of experience to being measured by observations of instruction and student learning.... We took a close look at Louisiana and Massachusetts, two early adopters of new teacher evaluation systems that have released effectiveness data using new measures. These states released the percentages of teachers in each rating category by state, district, and school.”

EMPLOYMENT

Local Minimum Wage Laws: Impacts on Workers, Families and Businesses. By Michael Reich, et al. Institute for Research on Labor and Employment. Mar. 2014. 44 p.

<http://irle.berkeley.edu/workingpapers/104-14.pdf>

“In summary, our assessment of the research evidence indicates that minimum wage mandates raise the incomes of low-wage workers and their families, and that the costs to businesses are absorbed largely by reduced turnover costs and by small price increases among restaurants. That said, it is important to emphasize that existing research is necessarily limited to the range of minimum wage increases that have been implemented to date. While these studies are suggestive, they cannot tell us what is likely to happen when minimum wages are increased significantly beyond current local, state, or general mandates.”

ENERGY

Change is in the Air: How States Can Harness Energy Efficiency to Strengthen the Economy and Reduce Pollution. By Sara Hayes, et al. American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. Apr. 2014. 85 p.

<http://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/publications/researchreports/e1401.pdf>

(Free registration required)

“The study shows how the Environmental Protection Agency could use four common energy efficiency policies to set a carbon pollution standard that reduces emissions to 26% below 2012 levels. In 2030, these policies would save 600 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions, save over 925 million MWh [metawatt hours] of electricity, reduce electricity demand by 25%, and avoid the need for 494 power plants.... [T]hese policies would significantly boost the economy, increasing the national gross domestic product by \$17.2 billion and creating 611,000 new jobs across the country in 2030.” (ACEEE News Release, Apr. 29, 2014).

ENVIRONMENT

Status of Groundwater Quality in the Borrego Valley, Central Desert, and Low-Use Basins of the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts Study Unit, 2008-2010: California GAMA Priority Basin Project.

By Mary C. Parsons, et al. U.S. Geological Survey. Apr. 2014. 100 p.

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2014/5001/>

This study evaluates the quality of untreated groundwater in aquifers near public-supply wells across the Mojave and Sonoran deserts. Samples from 52 wells were analyzed for volatile organic compounds, pesticides, and naturally-occurring inorganic constituents such as major ions and trace elements. Inorganic compounds were detected at high or moderate relative-concentrations in 48% and 26% of the wells, respectively. Organic compounds were detected at moderate relative-concentrations in 5% of the wells, and were either not detected at all or detected only at low relative-concentrations in the remaining 95%.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Ruthelle Frank v. Scott Walker. Case Number 11-CV- 01128, and League of United Latin American Citizens v. Judge David G. Deiniger. Case Number 12-CV-00185. United States District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin. Apr. 29, 2014. 90 p.

<http://media.jrn.com/documents/adelmanorder.pdf>

A federal judge in Wisconsin struck down the state's voter ID law, which would have required photo identification in order to vote. Finding that no voter impersonation has occurred in Wisconsin, the judge found the law in violation of the Voting Rights Act and the Constitution. This case could have implications for other states implementing voter ID laws.

HEALTH

Psychosocial and Economic Health of Older Asian Pacific Islanders in California. By Tonya D. Lindsey. California Research Bureau. May 2014. 2 p.

<http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/14/S-14-012.pdf>

"This Short Subject employs California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) indicators of mental health, social environment, and economic security to better understand the increasing number of older [Asian Pacific Islanders]."

The Five Most Costly Children's Conditions, 2011: Estimates for U.S. Civilian Noninstitutionalized Children, Ages 0-17. By Anita Soni. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Apr. 2014. 6 p.

http://meps.ahrq.gov/mepsweb/data_files/publications/st434/stat434.pdf

Using national survey data, this report presents the most costly children's conditions in terms of treatment. "In 2011, a total of \$117.6 billion was spent for the medical care and treatment of children. The top five conditions in terms of total health care expenditures were mental disorders, asthma (including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), trauma-related disorders, acute bronchitis and upper respiratory infections, and otitis media."

HUMAN SERVICES

Relationships Between Housing and Food Insecurity, Frequent Mental Distress, and Insufficient Sleep Among Adults in 12 U.S. States, 2009. By Yong Liu, et al. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mar. 13, 2014. 9 p.

http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2014/13_0334.htm

"Of 68,111 respondents, 26.4% reported frequent insufficient sleep, 28.5% reported housing insecurity, 19.3% reported food insecurity, and 10.8% reported frequent mental distress. The prevalence of frequent insufficient sleep was significantly greater among those who reported housing insecurity (37.7% vs 21.6%) or food insecurity (41.1% vs 22.9%) than among those who did not. The prevalence of frequent mental distress was also significantly greater among those reporting housing insecurity (20.1% vs 6.8%) and food insecurity (23.5% vs 7.7%) than those who did not. The association between housing insecurity or food insecurity and frequent insufficient sleep remained significant after adjustment for other sociodemographic variables and frequent mental distress."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

***Survey of Public Pensions: State & Local Data.* U.S. Census Bureau. 2014.**

<http://www.census.gov/govs/retire/>

“State- and Locally-Administered Defined Benefit Data provides revenues, expenditures, financial assets, and membership information for the defined benefit public pension systems. Data are shown for individual pension systems as well as at the national, state, and local level. There were 227 state-administered and 3,771 locally-administered defined benefit public pension systems, all of which are represented here.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***The Unfriendly Skies: Five Years of Airline Passenger Complaints to the Department of Transportation.* By Laura Murray. CALPIRG Education Fund. Apr. 2014. 25 p.**

<http://calpirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/CAP%20Airline%20Report%20Apr14.pdf>

“For over a decade, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has collected data on consumer complaints about air travel. This report analyzes these consumer complaints about U.S. air carriers for the five year period from 2009-2013, evaluates the effectiveness of new regulations and compares airlines’ performance. This report tracks trends in tens of thousands of consumer complaints over time, finding how some airlines have improved their rankings and others have worsened. We also compare consumer complaint data with other DOT data that tracks airlines’ on-time performance and baggage handling. The report finds that consumers’ greatest numbers of complaints were about Flight Problems, such as delays and cancellations.”

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