



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Ernest DeWayne Jones v. Kevin Chappell, Warden of California State Prison at San Quentin: Order Declaring California's Death Penalty System Unconstitutional and Vacating Petitioner's Death Sentence. Decision by Judge Cormac J. Carney, U.S. District Court, Central District of California. Case No. CV 09-02158-CJC. July 16, 2014. 29 p.

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1222115-order-declaring-californias-death-penalty-system.html>

"A federal judge ruled ... that California's death penalty system is so arbitrary and plagued with delay that it is unconstitutional, a decision that is expected to inspire similar arguments in death penalty appeals around the country. The state has placed hundreds of people on death row, but has not executed a prisoner since 2006.... That sense of uncertainty, [Judge Carney] wrote, 'violates the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment.' About 40% of California's death row inmates have been there more than 19 years." (*New York Times*, July 16, 2014).

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Digital Divide Persists in California: Wide Differences in Internet Use and Broadband Connectivity Across Demographic Subgroups of the State's Adult Population. Field Poll. July 8, 2014. 18 p.

<http://www.field.com/fieldpollonline/subscribers/RIs2476.pdf>

"Internet use varies significantly across different segments of the state's population. While greater than 95% of Californians age 18-29, college graduates and those with annual household incomes of \$60,000 or more report being an Internet user, significantly smaller proportions of other California adults do so.... [L]owest levels of Internet use [include]: Adults who have not graduated from high school (51%), Spanish-speaking Latinos, (60%), Seniors age 65 or older (67%), Non-citizens (70%), Residents with annual household incomes of less than \$20,000, (71%) Disabled adults (73%), [and] Naturalized citizens (76%)."

ECONOMY

Economic Analysis of the 2014 Drought for California Agriculture. By Richard Howitt, et al. Center for Watershed Sciences, University of California, Davis. July 15, 2014. 27 p.

https://watershed.ucdavis.edu/files/content/news/Economic_Impact_of_the_2014_California_Water_Drought.pdf

"This report updates estimates on the drought's effects on Central Valley farm production, presents new data on the state's coastal and southern farm areas, and forecasts the drought's economic fallout through 2016. The study found that the drought—the third most severe on record—is responsible for the greatest water loss ever seen in California agriculture.... The results highlight California agriculture's economic resilience and vulnerabilities to drought and underscore the state's reliance on groundwater to cope with droughts." (*Report Summary*, July 15, 2014).

EDUCATION

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence: California Universities Must Better Protect Students by Doing More to Prevent, Respond to, and Resolve Incidents. California State Auditor. June 2014. 113 p.

<http://www.auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2013-124.pdf>

This report recommends changing state law to require universities to train employees annually on responding to and reporting incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence involving students. The purpose is to educate incoming students on sexual harassment and sexual violence in the first few weeks of their arrival; and to post sexual harassment policies in campus housing and athletic facilities, locations frequented by students.

Kindergartners' Skills at School Entry: An Analysis of the ECLS-K. By Sara Bernstein, et al. Mathematica Policy Research. July 15, 2014. 8 p.

http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/~media/publications/pdfs/earlychildhood/kindergarten_skills_School_entry.pdf

“Kindergarten supports children’s cognitive, social, and emotional skills, leading to rapid gains in knowledge during this first year of education. However, not all children enter kindergarten equally prepared to meet the challenges ahead of them. Researchers have found stark differences in kindergartners’ language, literacy, and math abilities as well as their social skills and behavioral approaches to learning.... Using data from a nationally representative sample of kindergartners, we examined children’s skills at school entry across several academic and behavioral areas. This brief highlights the areas where attention before kindergarten might benefit all children as well as help close the gaps between more- and less-advantaged children.”

EMPLOYMENT

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education: Assessing the Relationship between Education and the Workforce. Government Accountability Office. GAO-14-374. May 2014. 80 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/663079.pdf>

“Both the number of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees awarded and the number of jobs in STEM fields increased in recent years. The number of degrees awarded in STEM fields grew 55% from 1.35 million in the 2002-2003 academic year to over 2 million in the 2011-2012 academic year, while degrees awarded in non-STEM fields increased 37%. Since 2004, the number of STEM jobs increased 16% from 14.2 million to 16.5 million jobs in 2012, and non-STEM jobs remained fairly steady. The trends in STEM degrees and jobs varied across STEM fields. It is difficult to know if the numbers of STEM graduates are aligned with workforce needs, in part because demand for STEM workers fluctuates.”

ENERGY

Safety, Codes and Standards for Hydrogen Installations: Hydrogen Fueling System Footprint Metric Development. By A.P. Harris, et al. Sandia National Laboratories. Apr. 30, 2014. 101 p.

http://energy.sandia.gov/wp/wp-content/gallery/uploads/SAND_2014-3416-SCS-Metrics-Development_distribution.pdf

“Researchers at Sandia National Labs found that a number of existing gas stations can safely store and dispense hydrogen fuel, suggesting that a broader network of hydrogen fueling stations may be within reach.... The report found that 14 of 70 commercial gas stations studied could receive hydrogen, and 17

more could possibly accept hydrogen with property expansions, based on the National Fire Protection Association codes published in 2011.” (*Phys.org*, July 8, 2014).

ENVIRONMENT

“Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stationary Sources, Electric Utility Generating Units: Proposed Rule.” *Federal Register*, vol. 79, no. 117 (June 18, 2014) pp. 34830-34958.
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-06-18/pdf/2014-13726.pdf>

“Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing emission guidelines for states to follow in developing plans to address greenhouse gas emissions from existing fossil fuel-fired electric generating units. Specifically, the EPA is proposing state-specific rate-based goals for carbon dioxide emissions from the power sector, as well as guidelines for states to follow in developing plans to achieve the state-specific goals. This rule, as proposed, would continue progress already underway to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from existing fossil fuel-fired power plants in the United States.” Comments on the proposed rule must be received on or before Oct. 16, 2014.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Understanding Public Debt: A State-by-State Comparison. By Robert Sarvis. Competitive Enterprise Institute. July 2014. 27 p.
<http://cei.org/sites/default/files/Robert%20Sarvis%20-%20Understanding%20Public%20Pension%20Debt.pdf>

With greater scrutiny of discount rates used to calculate pension debt, researchers find that unfunded pension liabilities shift rather dramatically from current discount rate calculations. California has shifted from unfunded pension liabilities totaling 8.1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 20% of GDP.

HEALTH

Safety of Vaccines Used for Routine Immunization in the United States. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. July 2014. 740 p.
<http://www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/ehc/products/468/1930/vaccine-safety-report-140701.pdf>

This report is the culmination of a comprehensive review of medical studies related to vaccines and their side effects. The technical expert panel conducted a literature search and reviewed medical studies in order to address key questions related to the safety of immunizations such as the flu vaccine. “There is evidence that some vaccines are associated with serious adverse events; however, these events are extremely rare and must be weighed against the protective benefits that vaccines provide.”

HUMAN SERVICES

How Much Could We Improve Children’s Life Chances by Intervening Early and Often? By Isabel V. Sawhill, et al. Brookings. July 2014. 9 p.
http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2014/07/improve_child_life_chances_interventions_sawhill/improve_child_life_chances_interventions_sawhill.pdf

“Children born into low-income families face multiple barriers to upward mobility: not just a lack of money, but a range of overlapping social, educational, economic and familial disadvantages. Sometimes these problems can seem intractable. But in fact, targeted, high-quality interventions can break down some of

the obstacles faced by low-income children.... A single intervention at one point in time will likely only have a modest effect. But intervening at multiple points can have large impacts on class and race gaps in child outcomes and improve social mobility quite dramatically." (*Brookings Blogs*, July 8, 2014).

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Oil by Rail Safety in California: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations. State of California Interagency Rail Safety Working Group. June 2014. 20 p.

<http://www.caloes.ca.gov/HazardousMaterials/Pages/Oil-By-Rail.aspx>

"In January 2014, the Governor's Office convened a Rail Safety Working Group to examine safety concerns and recommend actions the state and others should take in response to this emerging risk...[the Interagency Rail Safety Working group recommends that] the state should press both the federal government and the railroad industry to take additional safety measures. Additionally, the state should strengthen its inspection and enforcement resources, remedy significant gaps in its emergency preparedness and response programs, and provide the public with an interactive map showing potential high risk areas from oil by rail traffic."

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