



Studies in the News

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Pursuant to AB 2494 (Cooley, Chapter 425, Statutes of 2014), the California Research Bureau is now accepting copies of court filings regarding frivolous court actions or tactics. For more information, please see <http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/ab2494.html>.

Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Evaluating the 'more guns, less crime' hypothesis

ECONOMY

CA Hispanics held 1/5 of the state's spending power in 2013

EDUCATION

College students with children face significant challenges

EMPLOYMENT

More U.S. workers are unemployed and not looking for work

ENERGY

Study finds no evidence CA building energy codes reduce electricity use

Study says building energy codes can lead to zero net energy usage

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

State tax revenue continues its growth trend

HEALTH

NY DHS report concludes fracking could lead to potential health impacts

HUMAN SERVICES

Children of foreign-born parents less likely to receive food assistance

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Bicycle safety influenced by state policies

VETERANS

Suggested reforms for banks and credit unions serving the military

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Impact of Right to Carry Laws and the NRC Report: The Latest Lessons for the Empirical Evaluation of Law and Policy. By Abhay Aneja, et al. Social Science Research Network.

Dec. 1, 2014. 108 p.

(Available at the California State Library)

"For over a decade, there has been a spirited academic debate over the impact on crime of laws that grant citizens the presumptive right to carry concealed handguns in public—so-called right to carry (RTC) laws. In 2004, the National Research Council (NRC) offered a critical evaluation of the 'More Guns, Less

Crime' hypothesis using county-level crime data for the period 1977-2000.... We evaluate the NRC evidence and improve and expand on the report's county data analysis by analyzing an additional six years of county data as well as state panel data for the period 1979-2010.... Our paper highlights some important questions to consider when using panel data methods to resolve questions of law and policy effectiveness." The report uses regression analysis to offer a second opinion of the NRC's original work, bolstering the NRC's cautious conclusion on the effectiveness of the RTC laws, while providing "suggestive evidence that RTC laws may be associated with large increases in [aggravated assaults], perhaps increasing such gun assaults by almost 33%."

ECONOMY

The Power of the Purse: The Contributions of Hispanics to America's Spending Power and Tax Revenues in 2013. Partnership for a New American Economy. Dec. 2014. 18 p.

http://www.renewoureconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/PNAE_hispanic_contributions.pdf

This report provides an overview of the demographic and economic importance of Hispanics in the U.S. Nearly one in six people in the United States are Hispanic. Their after-tax income in 2013 was more than \$605 billion, which represents about 1 out of every 10 dollars of disposable income in the United States. Hispanic households contributed more than \$190 billion to federal taxes and almost \$67 million in state and local taxes. The report includes data at the national level and for selected states, including California, where Hispanics held 20.6% of the total spending power in the state in 2013 and paid \$51.5 billion in state and federal taxes.

EDUCATION

4.8 Million College Students are Raising Children. Institute for Women's Policy Research. Nov. 2014. 4 p.

<http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/4.8-million-college-students-are-raising-children>

"Approximately 2.1 million student parents attend 2-year institutions, representing 30% of the entire community college student body. An additional 1.1 million student parents attend four-year institutions (public and private not-for-profit), representing 15% of the total four-year undergraduate student body.... Students with children ... face significant time demands, with 56% of single parents devoting more than 30 hours per week to dependent care, and often have significant financial challenges."

EMPLOYMENT

Non-Employed Poll. Kaiser Family Foundation, et al. Dec. 2014. 46 p.

<http://files.kff.org/attachment/kaiser-family-foundation-new-york-times-cbs-news-non-employed-poll-topline>

New York Times' county-level interactive map:

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/12/12/upshot/where-men-arent-working-map.html#?abt=0002&abg=0>

"Working, in America, is in decline. The share of prime-age men—those 25 to 54 years old—who are not working has more than tripled since the late 1960s, to 16%. More recently, since the turn of the century, the share of women without paying jobs has been rising, too.... The decline of [men] work[ing] is divisible into three related trends.... Young men are spending more years in school, delaying their entry into the work force but potentially improving their eventual economic prospects.... many older men who lost jobs have fallen back on disability benefits or started to draw on retirement savings.... [and some are] too young to retire but often ill-equipped to find new work." (*New York Times*, Dec. 11, 2014).

ENERGY

How Much Energy Do Building Energy Codes Really Save? Evidence from California. By Arik Levinson. National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper No. 20797. Dec. 2014. 42 p.
<http://www.nber.org/papers/w20797>
(Available at the California State Library)

“Construction codes that regulate the energy efficiency of new buildings have been a centerpiece of U.S. environmental policy for 40 years. California enacted the nation’s first energy building codes in 1978, and they were projected to reduce residential energy use—and associated pollution—by 80%. How effective have the building codes been?...The study uses three approaches to answering that question with comparisons between homes of different vintages constructed under different standards, controlling for home size, local weather, and tenant characteristics.... All three approaches yield the same answer: there is no evidence that homes constructed since California instituted its building energy codes use less electricity today than homes built before the codes came into effect.”

Energy Codes for Ultra-Low-Energy Buildings: A Critical Pathway to Zero Net Energy Buildings. By Jennifer Thorne Amann. American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. Dec. 17, 2014. 47 p.
<http://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/publications/researchreports/a1403.pdf>
(Free registration required)

“A zero net energy (ZNE) building is a home or commercial building that on average produces as much energy as it uses, achieved through energy efficiency and renewable technologies. Building energy codes can help us transition to ZNE construction for new residential and commercial buildings by 2030. We will need to expand the scope of codes to capture all building energy uses, address whole building systems instead of focusing on individual components, and ... adopt outcome-based codes.... We can establish the foundation for ZNE by 2030 while providing energy savings and related benefits in the interim. Complementary policies, targeted research, market transformation, and the coordination of efforts and advocacy will help us achieve these goals.” (*ACEEE Blog*, Dec. 17, 2014).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Sunshine After the Rain: Revenue Collections Resume Growth After Declines in the First Half of 2014. By Lucy Dadayan, et al. The Rockefeller Institute of Government. Dec. 11, 2014. 5 p.
http://www.rockinst.org/newsroom/data_alerts/2014/2014-12-11-Data_Alert.pdf

State tax collections among 48 states show signs of growth in the third quarter of 2014 due to policy changes at the federal level and changes to state tax rates. Preliminary data indicate that “collections from major tax sources rose by 4.0% in nominal terms in the third quarter of 2014 compared to the same quarter of 2013.” Personal income tax collections grew at 4.3% in the third quarter of 2014. Sales tax collections grew at 5.9% nationwide, and corporate income tax rose by 8.9%. In California, personal income tax revenue experienced a 10.8% change in the third quarter, corporate income tax rose by 42.5%, and sales tax rose by 3.5%.

HEALTH

A Public Health Review of High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing for Shale Gas Development. New York State Department of Health. Dec. 2014. 184 p.
http://www.health.ny.gov/press/reports/docs/high_volume_hydraulic_fracturing.pdf

This study is largely credited as the research behind New York State’s proposed ban on high-volume hydraulic fracturing (HVHF). It is an analysis of available literature and an environmental impact report

previously conducted by the state, discussing potential impacts to air quality, water quality, and other health concerns. “[T]he overall weight of evidence from the cumulative body of information ... demonstrates that there are significant uncertainties about the kinds of adverse health outcomes that may be associated with HVHF, the likelihood of the occurrence of adverse health outcomes, and the effectiveness of some of the mitigation measures in reducing or preventing environmental impacts which could adversely affect public health.”

HUMAN SERVICES

Low-Income Immigrant Families’ Access to SNAP and TANF. By Devlin Hanson, et al. Urban Institute. Oct. 2014. 13 p.

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/2000013-Low-Income-Immigrants-Families-Access-to-SNAP-and-TANF.pdf>

Children who are citizens by birth or naturalization and live with one or more foreign-born parents qualify for federal means-tested programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). However, “[m]ixed eligibility within families presents a particular set of challenges that may prevent families from accessing benefits for eligible children ... such as language or cultural barriers, unclear eligibility requirements, and fears and misperceptions about immigration consequences related to receiving benefits.... The data in this brief reveal that although children with foreign-born parents are overrepresented among poor families, they are underrepresented in public benefits enrollment.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Bicyclist Safety. By Allan Williams. Governors Highway Safety Association. Oct. 2014. 19 p.

http://www.ghsa.org/html/files/pubs/spotlights/bikes_2014.pdf

“The popularity of bicycling has drawn attention to methods for protecting bicyclists when they travel on public roads. Deaths of bicyclists in collisions with motor vehicles have decreased substantially in the United States (U.S.) in recent decades, along with motor-vehicle related deaths in general.... Between 2010 and 2012, six states—California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Michigan, and Texas—accounted for 54% of all bicyclist deaths in collisions with motor vehicles. California (338) and Florida (329) had the highest totals, as well as the largest increases (Florida, +37; California, +23) in bicyclists killed.”

VETERANS

Checks and Balances, Stars and Stripes: Banking Practices at Financial Institutions Serving the Military. By Susan Weinstock, et al. Pew Charitable Trusts. Nov. 2014. 25 p.

<http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/Assets/2014/10/MilitaryCheckingBankingPracticesReportOct2014.pdf>

A review of account practices of the banks and credit unions that serve members of the U.S. military finds that banks within the Association of Military Banks of America (AMBA) provide clearer summary disclosures than Defense Credit Union Council (DCUC) member credit unions and that credit unions are significantly less likely than banks to require their customers to undergo arbitration in the event of a dispute. The researchers call for changes in bank practices—particularly: clearer disclosures about overdraft policies, neutral processing of transactions to decrease the likelihood of overdrafts, overdraft fees that are proportional to an institution’s cost of covering overdraft, and greater options for legal recourse in disputes.

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