



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

***California's Criminal Courts.* By Sonya Tafoya, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. Oct. 2015. 2 p.**

http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_show.asp?i=1165

This fact sheet includes some of the latest factual information regarding criminal courts in the state. California's criminal courts system consists of 58 superior or trial courts. They handle close to 7.5 million criminal, civil, family, probate, and mental health cases per year and receive around 1% of the state General Fund. Additionally, most reported crimes don't become criminal cases. The majority of criminal cases are traffic violations. The majority of felony cases never make it to trial (only 2% are settled by trial). Most felony filings result in convictions (70% of felony cases in 2013-2014). "[J]udges work within a complex and evolving sentencing framework" (e.g., determinate sentencing, the "three strikes law," and realignment).

EDUCATION

In School + On Track 2015: Attorney General's 2015 Report on California's Elementary School Truancy and Absenteeism Crisis. Attorney General's Office. 2015. 40 p.

<https://oag.ca.gov/truancy/2015>

This new report indicates that California still needs to work on truancy problems throughout the state, since “[m]ore than 1 in 5 elementary school students in California are truant based on data from the California Department of Education,” and an estimated “8% of elementary school students in California are chronically absent.” The data show which groups of students are missing school, “with disproportionately high rates of absenteeism and suspensions for students of color, low-income, homeless, foster youth, and special education students.” The report also highlights examples of progress in some school districts in the state through data gathering and parent outreach.

EMPLOYMENT

Measuring Wage Inequality Within and Across U.S. Metropolitan Areas, 2003–13. By J. Chris Cunningham. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Sep. 2015. 18 p.

<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2015/article/measuring-wage-inequality-within-and-across-metropolitan-areas-2003-13.htm>

“This article shows that location, size, and occupational composition play important roles in determining the level of wage inequality within and across U.S. metropolitan areas. Larger areas, especially in the Northeast and on the West Coast, typically have greater wage inequality, while smaller areas, many of which are in the South and Midwest, have less inequality. Metropolitan areas with high concentrations of employment in higher paying occupations also tend to have greater inequality.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Potential Injection-Induced Seismicity Associated with Oil & Gas Development: A Primer on Technical and Regulatory Considerations Informing Risk Management and Mitigation. Ground Water Protection Council and Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission. Sep. 2015. 148 p.

<http://www.gwpc.org/sites/default/files/finalprimerweb.pdf>

This report was developed by “representatives of state oil and gas regulatory agencies and geological surveys with support from subject matter experts from academia, industry, federal agencies, and environmental organizations. . . . The focus of this document is induced seismicity associated with underground disposal of oilfield-produced fluids in Class II wells . . . [and it suggests that] [m]anagement and mitigation of the risks associated with induced seismicity are best considered at the state level, with specific considerations at local or regional levels. A one-size-fits-all approach is infeasible, due to significant variability in local geology and surface conditions, including such factors as population, building conditions, infrastructure, critical facilities, and seismic monitoring capabilities.”

Challenges Facing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta: Complex, Chaotic or Simply Cantankerous? By Samuel N. Luoma, et al. Delta Stewardship Council. Sep. 2015. 34 p.

<http://resources.ca.gov/docs/DeltaChallenges-v13.pdf>

“In this paper we look at multifaceted questions about water and environmental management in the Delta. Our goal is not to evaluate specific recent initiatives, but to provide a larger framework to guide implementation of these and future initiatives. We illustrate how the complexity of the Delta problem complicates management and leads to inefficiency and conflict. We give examples of trade-offs, disagreements and the consequences of failure in managing these issues. We discuss why bold new

approaches to managing Delta issues are urgently needed to address inefficiencies in water use, aging infrastructure, and the deteriorating condition of native species.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government.* Public Policy Institute of California. Sep. 2015. 32 p.**

http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/survey/S_915MBS.pdf

“The survey presents the responses of 1,708 adult residents throughout California, interviewed in English or Spanish by landline or cell phone. It includes findings on the following topics: state government, including approval ratings of elected officials; overall outlook; opinions on tax proposals, including an extension of Proposition 30 taxes; views on the current water supply and whether people are doing enough in response to the drought; attitudes towards pension reform; assessments of crime levels and confidence in local government’s handling of the transfer of state prisoners to local jails; and perceptions of the state’s public higher education system, including whether the state will have enough college-educated residents in the future.”

HEALTH

***Caloric Intake From Fast Food Among Children and Adolescents in the United States, 2011-2012.* By Sundeep Vikraman, et al. NCHS Data Brief No. 213. National Center for Health Statistics. Sep. 2015. 8 p.**

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db213.htm>

Using data from a 2011-2012 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, this study found that one-third of all children and adolescents aged 2-19 consumed fast food on any given day. In addition, 12.1% of children and adolescents obtain more than 40% of their daily calories from fast food. No significant differences were noted by sex, poverty status or weight. However, “[n]on-Hispanic Asian children and adolescents aged 2-19 consumed significantly fewer daily calories (8.0%) from fast food compared with non-Hispanic white (13.1%), non-Hispanic black (13.9%), and Hispanic (11.2%) children and adolescents.”

HUMAN SERVICES

***World Family Map 2015: Mapping Family Change and Child Well-Being Outcomes.* By Mindy E. Scott, et al. Child Trends. Sep. 2015. 72 p.**

<http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-39WorldFamilyMap2015.pdf>

This report offers a unique opportunity to compare U.S. indicators of family structure, family socioeconomics and family culture with those in other countries around the world. “Families are changing around the world. Marriage is becoming less common. Severe economic hardships, including extreme poverty and undernutrition, are diminishing, yet remain real struggles for a significant minority of the world’s population. There are many other patterns to discover in the report. Each country and region has unique strengths to offer as an example for others to follow, and each also has areas of life where families face ongoing challenges.”

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Areas of Land Subsidence in California. United States Geological Survey.

http://ca.water.usgs.gov/land_subsidence/california-subsidence-areas.html

The USGS has released an interactive map that identifies which areas are experiencing land subsidence. “In California, large areas of land subsidence were first documented by USGS scientists in the first half of the 20th century. Most of this subsidence was a result of excessive groundwater pumping. Completion of California’s State and Federal water projects that bring water from California’s wet north to its dry south allowed some groundwater aquifers to recover, and subsidence decreased in these areas. However, subsidence continues today, sometimes at nearly historically high rates of more than 1 foot/year (ft/yr).”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Grading California’s Rail Transit Station Areas. Center for Law, Energy and the Environment at UC Berkeley School of Law. Oct 6, 2015. 33 p.

<http://www.next10.org/transitscorecard>

“A new analysis of California’s rail transit systems discovers which transit stations serve as hubs of thriving, walkable areas that encourage residents and workers alike to ride the train, and which station areas need improvement. The report divided rail transit station areas into three types: residential, employment, and mixed, and calculated grades based on 11 key indicators including walkability, ridership levels, existing land-use and permitting policies, affordability and transit quality.”

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