



New documents on political and social issues

April 2010

A CLIFF HANGER: HOW AMERICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS CONTINUE TO FEEL THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

American Association of School Administrators. Noelle M. Ellerson. April 2010.

[http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy_and_Advocacy/files/CliffHangerFINAL\(1\).pdf](http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy_and_Advocacy/files/CliffHangerFINAL(1).pdf)

Students and school systems across the nation are facing serious challenges as a result of the economic downturn, according to the survey. Compounding an already tough budget environment, schools are facing the harsh reality that stimulus funds will soon run out, as well as the Obama Administration's proposal to shift additional education dollars away from long-time formula grant programs to competitive grant programs.

AFTER HEALTH CARE REFORM COMES THE CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

Brookings Institution, March 22, 2010

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0322_health_care_galston.aspx

The passage of comprehensive health care reform is a historic moment in American public policy, says William Galston. But, Galston notes, the task now for President Obama and congressional Democrats is to switch from legislation to persuasion in the run up to November's midterm elections.

THE COSTS OF MASS DEPORTATION: IMPRACTICAL, EXPENSIVE, AND INEFFECTIVE

Center for American Progress, March 19, 2010

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/03/pdf/cost_of_deportation.pdf

Almost three years ago, Congress tried to reform the nation's broken immigration system but fell short of the mark. The core questions of what to do about undocumented immigrants already living in the United States and about those who are sure to seek our shores in the future thwarted political agreement and shut down congressional negotiations in 2007. Under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, deployment of new enforcement strategies and the allocation of enforcement resources have multiplied. Nonetheless, the inherent systemic dysfunction has deepened, and the public call for solutions has amplified.

CREATING A SAFETY NET THAT WORKS WHEN THE ECONOMY DOESN'T: THE ROLE OF THE FOOD STAMP AND TANF PROGRAMS

Urban Institute, April 14, 2010

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412068_food_stamps_tanf.pdf

The Food Stamp Program and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program have responded very differently to the unprecedented challenges that the current recession has posed to the nation's safety net. The Food Stamp Program, a federal entitlement program, has responded quickly to rising need: nationally, caseloads have increased by 4.6 million households since the beginning of the downturn. TANF, a fixed block grant provided directly to the states, has lagged behind: caseloads have increased by just 10 percent. For both programs, the recession has highlighted areas needing improvement to strengthen the safety net for this and future recessions.

DEATH ROW USA, FALL 2009

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, April 14, 2010

http://www.naacpldf.org/content/pdf/pubs/drusa/DRUSA_Fall_2009.pdf

According to the report, California, Florida and Texas continue to lead the nation in the number of death row inmates, with California (694) having a death row population almost twice as large as either Florida (395) or Texas (339). In addition, while Florida's and Texas' death row populations have declined in the last decade, California's population has grown steadily, from 551 inmates in 1999 to 694 in 2009. California has not had an execution since 2006. Overall, the country's death row population decreased since Death Row USA's report of July 1, 2009--from 3,279 to 3,263 as of Oct. 1.

DIGEST OF EDUCATION STATISTICS 2009

National Center for Education Statistics, April 7, 2010

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010013.pdf>

The Digest provides a compilation of statistical information covering the broad field of American education from prekindergarten through graduate school. It contains data on a variety of topics, including the number of schools and colleges, teachers, enrollments, and graduates, in addition to educational attainment, finances, and federal funds for education, libraries, and international comparisons.

DOING WHAT WORKS TO END U.S. HUNGER: FEDERAL FOOD PROGRAMS ARE EFFECTIVE, BUT CAN WORK EVEN BETTER

Center for American Progress, March 26, 2010

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/03/pdf/dww_hunger.pdf

This paper looks at the 20th century history of hunger and food insecurity in the United States alongside the key reforms that led to significant gains against these two scourges by the end of the 1970s. Then it briefly examines how these programs failed to keep pace with a changing U.S. economy but also highlights how well they worked during recent crises, specifically Hurricane Katrina and the Great Recession.

EDUCATION POLICY AND CRIME

National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2010

http://www.nber.org/papers/w15894.pdf?new_window=1

The paper discusses the relationship between education and crime from an economic perspective, developing a human capital-based model that sheds light on key ways in which early childhood programs and policies that encourage schooling may affect both juvenile and adult crime. The paper concludes with a broad discussion of education policy and its potential role as a crime-fighting strategy.

EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION: DOING WHAT WORKS IN EDUCATION REFORM

Center for American Progress, April 2010

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/04/pdf/dww_education.pdf

This report analyzes federal education programs that are candidates for elimination, consolidation, or restructuring, and discusses lessons derived from program funding and implementation. It reviews discretionary project grant programs and pre-college education programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL HEALTHCARE QUALITY AND DISPARITIES REPORT

Institute of Medicine, April 2010

http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12846

As the United States devotes extensive resources to health care, evaluating how successfully the U.S. system delivers high-quality, high-value care in an equitable manner is essential. At the request of Congress, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) annually produces the National Healthcare Quality Report (NHQR) and the National Healthcare Disparities Report (NHDR). The reports have revealed areas in which health care performance has improved over time, but they also have identified major shortcomings.

IMMIGRATION REFORM: REDESIGNING THE LEGAL SYSTEM AND UTILIZING TEMPORARY VISAS

Brookings Institution, April 15, 2010

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0415_immigration_reform_tessada.aspx

Any reform proposal on the table must not only address the situation of undocumented immigrants currently in the U.S., but also limit future undocumented flows. Regardless of how the U.S. decides to deal with its current stock of undocumented workers, the problem will continue to arise unless the reform legislation redesigns the legal immigration system.

THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT ON CHILD WELFARE

First Focus and Migration Child Welfare, April 7, 2010

<http://www.firstfocus.net/Download/Enforcement4.7.pdf>

The report examines the impact immigration enforcement has on the thousands of children of undocumented immigrants, 73% of whom are U.S. citizens. This includes risks to child safety and well-being, such as separation of children from parents. The report also highlights the growing challenges for state child welfare agencies that encounter separated children.

JOB SPRAWL AND THE SUBURBANIZATION OF POVERTY

Brookings Institution, March 30, 2010

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2010/0330_job_sprawl_stoll_raphael/0330_job_sprawl_stoll_raphael.pdf

In nearly all metropolitan areas in the United States, jobs have been moving to the suburbs for several decades. In the largest metropolitan areas between 1998 and 2006, jobs shifted away from the city center to the suburbs in virtually all industries. As the U.S. population also continues to suburbanize, larger proportions of metropolitan area employment and population are locating beyond the traditional central business districts along the nation's suburban beltways and the more distant fringes.

THE LANDSCAPE OF RECESSION: UNEMPLOYMENT AND SAFETY NET SERVICES ACROSS URBAN AND SUBURBAN AMERICA

Brookings Institution, March 2010

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2010/0330_recession_kneebone/0330_recession_kneebone.pdf

Within metropolitan areas, many communities continue to struggle with high unemployment and increasing economic and fiscal challenges, while at the same time poverty and the need for emergency and support services continue to rise. Even under the best case scenario of a sustained and robust recovery, cities and suburbs throughout the nation will be dealing with the social and economic aftermath of such a deep and lengthy recession for some time to come.

NATURALIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES: 2009

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, April 2010

http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/natz_fr_2009.pdf

In 2009, the total number of persons naturalizing was 743,715. The leading countries of birth of new citizens were Mexico (111,630), India (52,889), the Philippines (38,934), the People's Republic of China (37,130), and Vietnam (31,168). The largest number of persons naturalizing lived in California (179,754), New York (88,733), and Florida (82,788).

**REDUCING POVERTY AND ECONOMIC DISTRESS AFTER *THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT* (ARRA):
POTENTIAL ROLES FOR PLACE-CONSCIOUS STRATEGIES**

Urban Institute, April 2nd, 2010

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412067_reducing_poverty.pdf

Growing up poor is a challenge—and growing up in a poor neighborhood is even more challenging. Because community distress undermines individual outcomes and trajectories, place-based strategies have played a role in anti-poverty efforts.

TRENDS IN THE USE OF SCHOOL CHOICE: 1993 TO 2007

National Center for Education Statistics, April 8, 2010.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010004.pdf>

The report uses data from the National Household Surveys Program (NHES) to present trends that focus on the use of and users of public schools (assigned and chosen), private schools (church- and non church-related), charter schools, and homeschoolers between 1993 and 2007.

THE 2009 BROWN CENTER REPORT ON AMERICAN EDUCATION: HOW WELL ARE AMERICAN STUDENTS LEARNING?

Brookings Institution, March 17, 2010

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2010/0317_education_loveless/0317_education_loveless.pdf

This year's Brown Center Report contains studies taking a long view. Part I examines national test data going back to 1971 from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The study in Part II compares the 1989 test scores of more than 1,000 schools to the same schools' scores in 2009. Part III compares the test scores of conversion charter schools from 1986, when they operated as traditional public schools, to those from 2008, when they operated as charter schools. The studies tackle perennial questions that, as often happens in education, manifest themselves as controversial topics on the contemporary scene: how to interpret trends in test scores, the distribution of achievement, school turnarounds, and charter schools.

U.S. BIRTH RATE DECLINE LINKED TO RECESSION

Pew Research Center, April 6, 2010

<http://pewsocialtrends.org/assets/pdf/753-birth-rates-recession.pdf>

Birth rates in the United States began to decline in 2008 after rising to their highest level in two decades, and the decrease appears to be linked to the recession, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of state fertility and economic data.

U.S. LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENTS: 2009

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, April 2010

http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/lpr_fr_2009.pdf

In 2009, a total of 1,130,818 persons became Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) of the United States. The majority of new LPRs (59 percent) already lived in the United States when they were granted lawful permanent residence. Nearly two-thirds were granted permanent resident status based on a family relationship with a U.S. citizen or legal

permanent resident of the United States. The leading countries of birth of new LPRs were Mexico (15 percent), China (6 percent), and the Philippines (5 percent).

WRITING TO READ: EVIDENCE FOR HOW WRITING CAN IMPROVE READING

Alliance for Excellent Education, April 14, 2010

<http://www.all4ed.org/files/WritingToRead.pdf>

Although some progress has been made in improving the literacy achievement of students in American high schools during the last twenty years, the majority of students still do not read or write well enough to meet grade-level demands. Poor literacy skills play a role in why many of these students do not complete high school. The report identifies instructional practices in writing shown to improve students' reading abilities and recommends ways that teachers can improve students' reading skills through teaching writing.

YOUTH'S NEEDS AND SERVICES

Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, April 2010

<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/227728.pdf>

The study shows findings from the Survey of Youth in Residential Placement (SYRP) on how facilities have addressed youth's needs, what services youth receive, and where these services could be improved. SYRP is the first comprehensive national survey to gather information about youth in custody by surveying the detained offenders. Findings show that youth have substantive needs in the four areas examined, mental health, substance abuse, health care, and education.

All previous web alerts can be found at:
<http://france.usembassy.gov/web-alert.html>