ABORTION

1. Medoff, Marshall H. & Christopher Dennis. "A critical reexamination of the effect of anti-abortion legislation in the post-Casey era." State Politics & Policy Quarterly. Vol. 14. No. 3. Sept. 2014. pg. 207-227. (Michael J. New, in a recent article in this journal, argues that a major reason for the decline in the incidence of abortion since the U.S. Supreme Court's 1992 Casey decision was the increased number of anti-abortion laws-parental involvement laws and informed consent laws-enacted at the state level. However, New's analysis contained critical data, measurement, methodological and estimation errors. This article details all the errors and then reexamines the effect of restrictive state abortion laws on the incidence of abortion over the period 1985-2005.)

2. New, Michael. “Analyzing the impact of U.S. anti-abortion legislation in the post-Casey era: a reassessment.” State Politics & Policy Quarterly. Vol. 14. No. 3. Sept. 2014. Pg. 228-268. (Marshall Medoff and Christopher Dennis identify some errors in the National Abortion League’s data on the effective start dates of various state-level anti-abortion laws. However, they misunderstand the purpose of my 2011 State Politics & Policy Quarterly article which was to measure the impact of a range of anti-abortion laws-not analyze competing theories as to why the abortion rate has fallen in the United States. Furthermore, their analysis contains a number of critical measurement, and methodological and estimation errors.)

3. Medoff, Marshall H. & Christopher Dennis. "Another critical review of New's reanalysis of the impact of anti-abortion legislation." State Politics & Policy Quarterly. Vol. 14. No. 3. Sept. 2014. pg. 269-276. (In New's reassessment article, he now argues that "properly designed" informed consent laws significantly reduce the incidence of abortion. The authors point to some of the same errors that were present in his 2011 article from State Politics & Policy Quarterly that reappear in his reassessment article. The authors have detailed some of the methodological errors.)

AGRICULTURE

4. Orr, Carolyn. "Use of 'big data' in agriculture yields big benefits and privacy concerns for producers." Stateline Midwest. Vol. 23. No. 8. July/Aug. 2014. pg. 3. ("Big data" is the term applied to the sorting and processing of enormous quantities of data, and the ability to crunch massive amounts of data may be as important to the future of food production as the development of the tractor was for 20th-century agriculture.)

BUDGET

5. "Budget & taxes." Capitol Journal. Vol. XXII. No. 27. Sept. 8, 2014. pg. 5-6. (Performance-based budgeting is catching on again in states. Performance-based budgeting relies on specific measures of past performance, such as how many people were served and for how much money to determine how much more or less should be allocated for a particular government program.)

CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS

6. Hernandez, Michael D. "All-mail elections," NCSL. Legisbrief. Vol. 22. No. 35. Sept. 2014. 2 pg. (Voters in Colorado, Oregon, and Washington administer all elections entirely through mail. This trend has been quietly growing and is prompting legislators to consider whether all-mail elections are a good fit for their state or community.) VF: Election Procedure.

8. Branham, Mary. "States make changes to get out the vote." Capitol Ideas. Vol. 57. No. 5. Sept./Oct. 2014. pg. 12-17. (Since 2012, 16 states have passed laws to improve the election system and increase voting access; laws in 11 of those states will be in effect by Election Day in November.)

9. Kalisa, Kamanzi. "Voting system technology a 'ticking time bomb.' " Capitol Ideas. Vol. 57. No. 5. Sept./Oct. 2014. pg. 16-17. (Much of the technology implemented in the 2002 Help America Vote Act is now outdated, and state and local official are looking at the next generation of election equipment.)


**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**


**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

13. Clark, Korey. "Business as usual for business tax breaks?" Capitol Journal. Vol. XXII. No. 27. Sept. 8, 2014. pg. 1-5. (States say they are being far more cautious with the tax incentives they offer companies. But they are still handing them out in droves.)


**EDUCATION**


18. Cannon, Lou. "Once valued Common Core becomes a political football." Capitol Journal. Vol. XXII. No. 28. Sept. 15, 2014. pg. 1-5. (Four years ago, all but a quartet of states were gung ho for the Common Core curriculum standards. Now a growing number of states, pushed by hyperpartisan members in each party, are forcing some states to reconsider.)

19. Queen, Jack. "Hire power." State Legislatures. Vol. 40. No. 8. Sept. 2014. pg. 16-21. (To close the skills gap, states are teaming up with industries that need, but can't find, qualified workers.)

21. "A hidden cause of rising tuition: Tuition discounting in public colleges and universities." The Progress of Education Reform. Vol. 15. No. 4. Aug. 2014. pg. 1-7. (This issue examines tuition discounting, with specific attention focused on the impact of state-legislated tuition caps can have on the practice.)

22. Samuels, Christina A. "Kindergarten: state policies a patchwork." Education Week. Vol. 34. No. 4. Sept. 17, 2014. pg. 1+. (Despite kindergarten's pivotal role in preparing children for reading and other academics, state laws on what districts must provide still vary widely, resulting in a patchwork of mandatory and voluntary half-day and full-day offerings.)

23. Klein, Alyson. "1989 Education Summit casts long shadow." Education Week. Vol. 34. No. 5. Sept. 24, 2014. pg. 1+. (25 years ago this month, President George H.W. Bush and the nation's governors took an unprecedented step that poured political accelerant on the movement for standards-based education reform: they proclaimed that the country needed to set educational goals on a variety of issues from early-childhood education to adult literacy-and to hold itself accountable for meeting these standards.)

EMPLOYERS & EMPLOYEES

24. Queen, Jack. "Hire power." State Legislatures. Vol. 40. No. 8. Sept. 2014. pg. 16-21. (To close the skills gap, states are teaming up with industries that need, but can't find, qualified workers.)

ENERGY


FINANCE & REVENUE


HEALTH, WELFARE & SOCIAL SERVICES

27. Melean, Tadeo. "WIC: supporting the health and nutrition of pregnant women, infants and children." NCSL. Legisbrief. Vol. 22. No. 33. Sept. 2014. 2 pg. (The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, commonly known as WIC, is up for review and renewal in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization of 2015. Among the main topics of consideration are the reauthorization approaches, the low (60%) national participation rate, the federal requirement that all WIC agencies implement a WIC electronic benefit transfer system, the effects of increasing food prices on program funding, and the new nutrition rules to be included in WIC food packages.) VF: Public Assistance.

28. Comlossy, Megan. "Preventing pregnancy among older teens." NCSL. Legisbrief. Vol. 22. No. 36. Sept. 2014. 2 pg. (There is good news that teenage birth rates again reached historic lows in 2013, but bad news in that U.S. teen pregnancy, birth and abortion rates remain among the highest in the developed world. To dramatically shift teen pregnancy rates, state legislatures are increasingly devoting attention and resources to effective strategies that prevent pregnancy among this population.) VF: Teenage Pregnancy.

HOUSING

29. Clark, Korey. "Minimum wage, marijuana, gambling, and guns dominate slow year for state ballot measures." Capitol Journal. Vol. XXII. No. 30. Oct. 6, 2014. pg. 1-5. (The number of ballot measures is down a bit this year, but voters will still have plenty of them to weigh in on come Election Day.)
INSURANCE


PRIVACY

31. Orr, Carolyn. "Use of 'big data' in agriculture yields big benefits and privacy concerns for producers." Stateline Midwest. Vol. 23. No. 8. July/Aug. 2014. pg. 3. ("Big data" is the term applied to the sorting and processing of enormous quantities of data, and the ability to crunch massive amounts of data may be as important to the future of food production as the development of the tractor was for 20th-century agriculture.)

STATE LEGISLATURES

32. Tomaka, Laura. "In Midwest, states split on whether legislating should be part- or full-time work." Stateline Midwest. Vol. 23. No. 8. July/Aug. 2014. pg. 4. (This article discusses the pros and cons of full-time legislature vs. part-time legislature.)

STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT


TAXATION

36. Clark, Korey. "Business as usual for business tax breaks?" Capitol Journal. Vol. XXII. No. 27. Sept. 8, 2014. pg. 1-5. (States say they are being far more cautious with the tax incentives they offer companies. But they are still handing them out in droves.)

37. Susa, James M. "Arizona's prime contracting taxation: scope narrowed, future uncertain." Journal of State Taxation. Vol. 32. No. 4. Fall 2014. pg. 43-46. (James Susa explains that Arizona's tax on prime contracting has historically had difficulties in terms of compliance and administration; however, the state has begun making amendments to the tax laws to narrow the scope of the tax to provide some simplification for taxpayers.)

TECHNOLOGY ISSUES


TOBACCO