

POLICY WATCH – October 2022

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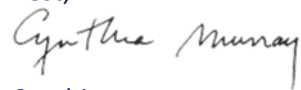


In this issue, we have gratitude for all that is going right in our lives and our world. This month we focus on what has gotten better as a counterpoint to the challenges ahead so we can keep a balanced view of the improvements that have been so remarkable in our world. We also thank you for subscribing to our newsletter and being a part of the North Bay community. We appreciate your interest and value your support.

We also take a look at the voting in the midterms and the growing impact of the younger voters. As said in the article, while the youth vote grew, imagine if they voted in the same high percentages of the Baby Boomers. When that happens, the youth will truly be the leaders of our democracy.

All of us at NBLC, wish you very Happy and Healthy Holidays!

Best,



Cynthia

Giving Thanks for the Bright Spots in 2022

As we transition from the pandemic recovery to the looming recession, in a world filled with challenges, we also want to remember to have gratitude for the good things in our lives. One way to do that is to have a Gratitude List where you write down all the things that you appreciate in your life, work and world. Here's our list which is not inclusive!

Ray Kurzweil, futurist and scientist, predicts: "We will see as much progress in the decade ahead (2023 – 2033) as we have seen in the past century (1922 – 2022)." And complementing that prediction is Thomas Babington Macaulay, Review of Southey's Colloquies on Society, c. 1830, who said "On what principle is it, that when we see nothing but improvement behind us, we are to expect nothing but deterioration before us?" Let's explore some of the good that's happening in our world.

In [9 astonishing ways that living standards have improved around the world](#) by Tony Morley, Big Think, ([Link](#)), we learn that "Most people think the world is bad and getting worse, but scientific data proves otherwise. In reality, the world has never been richer and healthier than it is now. And it continues to get better.

Below are nine particular improvements in living standards are driving this trend from this article.

#1. Life expectancy

Whether you live in the United States, life expectancy at birth (79 years), the United Kingdom (81 years), Egypt (72 years), or Bangladesh (73 years), there has never been a better or more likely time to live into old age. Travel back just 200 years to the United Kingdom in 1822, and the people around you would have a life expectancy at birth of no more than 40 years, while India and Bangladesh could expect an average life of just 25 years. Between 1800 and 2021, life expectancy in most of today's best-performing countries, such as Norway (83 years) and Japan and Singapore (85 years each), improved by 159%, 136%, and 193%, respectively, according to data gathered by Gapminder.

#2. Extreme poverty

Extreme poverty, that is, living on just \$1.90 per day or less, is an almost unimaginable degree of hardship and suffering. However, it also has been the default starting point for all countries. For nearly all of human history, this was everyone's fate, spare but a few elites. Those who lived through pre-industrial civilization lived in a world where nearly 90% of the world's population lived in extreme poverty, almost always one poor harvest, moderate injury, or illness away from immediate hunger and lack of shelter.

Global extreme poverty began to decline in the early years of the 17th century but gathered the greatest pace from 1950 onward, as globalization began to accelerate the trade and exchange of knowledge, technology, resources, and services. The greatest reduction in extreme poverty began in 1990, with a precipitous 15-year decline that saw approximately 1.1 billion people climb out of extreme poverty. That is roughly 75 million, annually, or 6.25 million a month, every month, for 15 consecutive years. In the seven decades since 1950, global extreme poverty has declined from 63% to roughly 9.5% in 2015.

#3. Indoor air pollution

High levels of indoor air pollution have reduced the quality of life for generations of people forced to utilize solid biofuels for heating and cooking — historically nearly everyone — but today largely relegated to developing countries. The combustion of poor quality and inefficient solid fuels in and around living areas blackens walls and lungs alike, with a disproportionate health impact on those over 50 and under 5 years of age. Global illness attributed to indoor air pollution accounts for 4% of all deaths, about 2.3 million globally in 2019.

However, since 1990, civilization has made outstanding progress in reducing the burden of indoor air pollution. In the nearly three decades between 1990 and 2019, premature deaths attributed to household air pollution fell by over 2 million across all countries. The vast majority of the progress in improving indoor air quality has been driven by global economic growth, as well as the increase in incomes for the people living in low-income countries. As incomes in low-income countries increase, many families are able to gradually make the switch from the most polluting and dangerous heating and cooking fuels (wood, charcoal, and coal) to incrementally cleaner fuels, like kerosene and ethanol. From 2000 to 2020, the share of the population with access to clean fuels for cooking climbed steadily from 49.5% to 69%. Indoor air gets even cleaner as people get access to electricity.

#4. Food and famine

We are living in the best-fed time in human history. Never before has the average human had such abundant access to a high-quality, nutritious, and dependable food supply. The history of humanity through the lens of food is a history of hunger and famine. It's a history of subsistence, permanently on the edge of starvation.

In the decades between the 1860s and 1940s, global famines claimed, on average, about 57 lives per 100,000; from the 1950s to 2016, it was just 14.4 lives per 100,000, a reduction of about 75%. The forces that restrained famine simultaneously increased access to food, with daily per capita kilocalorie supply increasing globally by approximately 30%. In India, supply went up from 2,020 daily kilocalories to 2,549; in China, per capita kilocalorie supply grew from 1,427 to 3,375 daily. Even that most valuable foodstuff, protein, increased in consumption per capita globally by more than 30% between 1961 and 2019, helping reduce protein deficiency in developing countries.

#5. Vaccination

Few innovations have saved more than a billion lives, but vaccinations definitely have (along with clean water, better sanitation, and synthetic fertilizers). The smallpox vaccine alone is thought to have saved approximately 5 million lives annually, or between 150 million to 200 million lives in total, between 1980 and 2018. Together, the 15 most common vaccinations, from diphtheria and measles to pertussis and rubella, have helped save the lives of billions, with children under the age of 5 being the biggest beneficiaries. As a result, child mortality rates plummeted.

#6. Literacy

From books to blogs, humanity is figuratively awash in knowledge. In 2010, Google software engineer Leonid Taycher estimated that nearly 130 million books had been written. This figure obviously excludes countless websites, and equally countless papers, journals, and other valuable expressions of written text. The ability to read and write has been instrumental in growing prosperity, but until relatively recently, most people were illiterate.

Today we live in the most educated and literate time in human history, with the vast majority of the world literate. However, there is still progress to be made in places with low literacy rates, such as Afghanistan (37%), Mali (31%), and Niger (35%). In Somalia, the World Bank estimates a literacy rate of merely 5%.

#7. Safe water and sanitation

Historically, a lack of safe water and sanitation has led to massive illness and death. We take tap water and toilets for granted, but these innovations saved the lives of billions of people from infectious disease. In the 18th century, almost no one had access to safe water and sanitation.

There is a long way to go. Globally, unsafe water sources and poor sanitation accounted for 1.2 million and 756,000 deaths, respectively, in 2019. In low-income countries, unsafe water sources account for 4.6% of all deaths, while unsafe sanitation accounts for 3.4%. Progress is occurring slowly but surely. Globally, the share of the population with access to safely managed water grew from 62% in 2000 to 74% in 2021, and access to sanitation improved from 29% in 2000 to 54% in 2020.

#8. Child mortality

Vulnerable to injury and disproportionately at risk of death from infectious disease and malnutrition, it has taken civilization a long time to figure out how best to keep most children alive. The progress made in reducing child mortality — that is, the share of children who die before their fifth birthday — is unprecedented but little celebrated.

From roughly 1860 to 1920, child mortality fell from more than 40% to roughly 30% globally, after which it began a steady and largely uninterrupted decline. By 1986, the rate was just 9.86%. This decline was not exclusive to high-income countries; it was nearly universal, albeit at different rates from country to country. Between 1950 and 1986, the child mortality rate in Africa and Asia fell from 32% and 25% to 18%

and 10%, respectively. By 2019, it fell again to 7% and 2.8%, respectively, while the average global rate in 2021 fell to 3.7%.

#9. Economic growth

In the years between 1820 and 2018, global inflation-adjusted GDP per capita grew at an unprecedented rate, from \$1,102 to more than \$15,000. That incredible increase in global productivity and prosperity fundamentally changed our planet. Economic growth is the engine of progress and the primary driver of innovation, which improves living standards and boosts overall human flourishing.

Never before has the average person lived a longer life or with higher living standards. Whereas in 1800, just one country, Finland, had a life expectancy of over 40 years and the vast majority of countries had an inflation-adjusted GDP per capita of \$500 to \$2,000, today, no country anywhere has a life expectancy at birth of under 52 years, and the majority of the global population lives in countries with a GDP per capita of \$4,000 to \$63,000. Gapminder presents what is perhaps the single most important graph in human history: Increasing wealth leads to increasing life expectancy.

In other articles we learn more good news about improvements in our lives and world:

Healthcare Coverage:

In [Life Is Good in America, Even by European Standards](#) by Tyler Cowan, Bloomberg ([Link](#)) we see America is doing better on healthcare coverage. Cowan says, “Obamacare is highly imperfect along a variety of dimensions, but US health care coverage has never been higher — the percentage of the uninsured population is now 8%. Keep in mind that many of those uninsured may have decided not to purchase health insurance, instead preferring to spend their money in other ways. That might be a personal mistake, but that is not the same thing as a systemic failure of the entire US health care regime.”

Full Jobs Recovery in California:

“October 2022 marks a significant milestone for California with employment in the state reaching full recovery from the pandemic driven losses.’ said [Taner Osman](#), Research Manager at Beacon Economics and the UCR Center for Economic Forecasting. This feat is particularly impressive since the state’s labor force has about one-quarter of a million fewer workers than it did prior to the crisis. The lowest unemployment rate on record has helped to offset the contraction in the state’s labor force.”

“California’s unemployment rate grew to 4.0% in October, a 0.2 percentage-point increase over the previous month. This matched the increase in the national economy over the same period. The state’s 3.8% unemployment rate in September was the lowest rate on record, and the present figure remains near historic lows.”

And the website, GoodGoodGood, has [The Best Good News Stories From 2022 \(So Far\)](#), ([Link](#)), with lots of articles about things that went right in 2022. Here’s some of the ones they mention:

Public Doesn’t Want Book Bans:

A national survey found that a large majority of voters and parents trust librarians and oppose book bans. Lately, headlines have been dominated by states and school districts working to push through book bans. When this happens, it can be easy to think that, since it’s dominating the news and policymaking, this must be the way ‘most people’ feel and think.

A new national study from the American Library Association (ALA) confirmed the opposite: 7 in 10 voters oppose efforts to remove books from public libraries — across party lines, too — and three-quarters of parents of public schoolchildren ‘express a high degree of confidence in school librarians to make good decisions about which books to make available to children.’

Here are some findings from the survey:

- 71% of voters oppose efforts to have books removed from their local public libraries — including 75% of Democrats and 70% of Republicans.
- 90% of and 92% of parents have a "favorable opinion" of librarians who work in local public libraries and school libraries
- 75% of voters are confident in local public libraries to make good decisions about what books to include in their collections
- 74% of parents are confident in public school libraries’ decisions about their collections

Renewable Energy Meets Demand for First Time:

For the first time ever, renewable electricity sources met 100% of California's energy demands. As the Desert Sun reports, on Saturday, April 30 at 2:45 p.m., energy demand statewide hit 18,672 megawatts. Of that demand, 101% of the power provided came from renewables, according to a continuous tracker provided by California Independent System Operator (CAISO) a nonprofit that oversees the state's bulk electric power system and transmission lines.

Two-thirds of the 18,000 megawatts were provided by solar power, and the rest came from wind, geothermal, and other renewable sources. The renewable electricity lasted almost 15 minutes before decreasing to about 97% renewables.

While it only lasted 15 minutes, it's an incredibly encouraging and exciting milestone as we work to decarbonize our electric grid — and proof of what we already knew: a carbon-free future is a realistic, viable goal.

Equal Pay Wins in Soccer:

In a historic agreement, the U.S. men’s and women’s soccer teams will now be paid equally. It's a landmark victory for equality! US Soccer and the unions for both the US Soccer MNT and US Soccer WNT announced they reached a new agreement that will achieve ‘equal pay and set the global standard moving forward in international soccer.’

In 2016, members of the U.S. women's national team filed an equal pay lawsuit against U.S. Soccer for unequal pay and treatment. While the league made changes, it still wasn't equal. So, in 2019, they filed another lawsuit demanding ‘at least equal playing, training, and travel conditions; equal promotion of their games; equal support and development for their games; and other terms and conditions of employment.’ That lawsuit ended in a settlement with players on the women's team, which was a helpful step forward.

Now, under the new, historic agreement, players on both teams will receive the same pay, including appearance fees and game bonuses, and be provided the same working conditions. While players on the

women's team previously had guaranteed salaries, they will now have the same pay-to-play structure as players on the men's team. They will also pool and share any FIFA World Cup prize money.

1 Billion Trees to be Planted:

Good climate news! The Biden Administration announced it will plant 1 billion trees in the western U.S. A large-scale win for reforestation efforts, the Biden Administration announced its plans to plant over 1 billion new trees across millions of acres of burned and dead woodlands in the Western part of the U.S.

Ecologists and foresters are battling the increasing brunt of wildfires and insect infestations, leaving the government overwhelmed by the need to plant new trees, as forests struggle to naturally regenerate. There's a backlog of 4.1 million acres in need of replanting, meaning the U.S. Department of Agriculture will need to quadruple the number of tree seedlings produced in nurseries to meet forestation needs. Now, the Forest Service will scale up its replanting efforts from 60,000 acres a year, to about 400,000 acres.

Fighting Climate Change:

Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act, in addition to important tax and health care changes, the bill includes the largest-ever federal investment in fighting climate change. It includes extending incentives and tax credits for building clean energy capacity, providing financial incentives to consumers for purchasing electric vehicles and making efficiency and electrification upgrades at home, investments in environmental justice, and more.

It's the largest-ever investment in fighting climate change in the U.S. — around \$370 billion total. And energy experts say the bill will cut emissions by about 40 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, both getting the Biden administration on track to meet its goal of cutting emissions in half by that year and getting the U.S. two-thirds of the way to its Paris Agreement goal.

And if you want more things to be grateful for, check out the mother of all gratitude lists, [263 Things to Be Grateful For in 2022: The Ultimate Gratitude List](#) by Jenn Kropf ([Link](#)). Here is a sampling from that list:

7. Your health. It is said that...health is the crown that sits on the well man's head that only the sick man can see.
17. Our freedoms and rights. Saying what you want, practicing your religion in your own way, and voting are not commonplace everywhere.
32. Making someone else feel good. Getting someone to laugh or smile is such a great way to spend the day.
45. Animals. They all make life a lot more interesting, help sustain us, or love us.
106. Mentors. Those people that take an interest in your progress and give you support.
131. Good neighbors that watch out for you.
144. Flowers and plants that brighten up where you live.
165. Sunrises and sunsets. So beautiful when you stop to look.

Congratulations to the Victors in the Midterms!

NBLC congratulates the victorious candidates in the midterms. We applaud all the candidates for choosing to run and helping to give voters choices on who would be best to represent them. There were some surprises in some of the outcomes of the elections but what was notable was the impact that younger voters had in determining the results.

In [No, California's young voters did not turn out more than seniors. But they did clinch elections](#) by Paul Mitchell ([Link](#)), he says, "Looking just at California, among the ballots we have recorded so far (as of November 21), there were 3.2 million seniors who cast ballots among the 5.1 million registered, but of the 6 million voters under 35, only 1.3 million voted. Seniors comprise 23% of voters but 36% of ballots cast; younger voters are 27% of voters and only 15% of ballots cast. This gap will narrow a bit as we get final numbers from county registrars, but the story will stay the same: young people are massively underperforming."

But Mitchell says, "In case you think California's youth is especially disengaged, that's not true. Studies show young Californians are more engaged, and our younger voters have a higher registration rate than other states. While youth turnout is disappointingly low, young people put their stamp on this election nonetheless – and it is because of their much more strident ideological stances."

"Seniors are balanced in their political leanings, says Mitchell, "with recent polling from Capitol Weekly showing that approximately 40% of voters over 35 years old identify as moderates, with equal numbers considering themselves either liberal or conservative. This in contrast to the 25% of younger voters who identify as moderates and are more liberal than conservative at a 3 to 1 ratio."

But Mitchell says, "Most strikingly, upwards of 40% of these young voters consider themselves very liberal, while other age groups are in single-digits. We can see this in recent polling which shows seniors in California favor Democrats by a 50% to 36% margin, while young voters are polarized toward Democratic candidates at a 70% to 18% margin. Seniors are reliably Democratic-leaning in California but modestly so. Younger voters – even in their smaller numbers – are providing progressives with the overwhelming margins needed to win elections."

Mitchell describes another way younger voters are changing voting. "One way in which we see this data come to life is the "blue shift" in the post-election counting of ballots. Analysis of the voters who are having their votes counted in the batches of late-received (but postmarked on time) includes large numbers of younger voters. In the early waves of vote-by-mail ballots, seniors were outpacing young voters by a 5 to 1 margin. But in the late ballots, a third of ballots were from young voters and fewer than 15% from seniors. Democrats and left-leaning candidates in intra-party runoffs and municipal elections are gaining votes."

"Splitting these concepts is important," says Mitchell. "We don't need to continue the false narrative that young people are voting more than seniors – that's just not true and hides the real challenge faced with this population. But we can recognize that the massive left-leaning nature of young voters is driving election outcomes. They help Democrats in California earn massive supermajorities in the Assembly and Senate, elect a Congressional delegation that is nearly 4 to 1 Democratic, and provide support for the state's environmental, gay rights, social, housing and other progressive agendas."

Mitchell concludes, "Young people in California and nationally are effectively helping progressives win, and they were a pivotal election constituency in 2022. One can only imagine what it would look like if they doubled their turnout and met seniors head-on in a future election."

Members in the News

Star Staffing Presents Legal Updates: Preparing for 2023 (Webinar)

During this one-hour webinar, you'll find out how you can best prepare for a successful 2023.

BPM LLP Launches New Brand

BPM LLP, one of the 40 largest public accounting and advisory firms in the country, launches its new brand – further reinforcing the Firm's commitment to its brand promise, "Because People Matter."

Congratulations to the 2022 North Bay Gives Awards Winners

This year the North Bay Business Journal has sought to recognize those companies, individuals and nonprofits that make the area a better place to live for all.

College of Marin News from the Advancement Office

A brief update on some recent news and current events at College of Marin is available now!

Woodruff Sawyer & Co.'s Andrew Silva Named 2022 Rising Star by Insurance Business America

At the start of summer this year, the IBA team invited insurance professionals across the US to nominate the most exceptional young talent they work with for the annual Rising Stars list.

MarinHealth Names New Chief Human Resources Officer as Exec Plans Retirement

Eugene Lewis is the new chief human resources officer of MarinHealth, operators of MarinHealth Medical Center, the MarinHealth Medical Network, and ancillary services.

Redwood Credit Union's International Credit Union Day Celebration Donates More than \$45,000 to Support Community Empowerment

Redwood Credit Union joined credit unions around the world in celebrating International Credit Union (ICU) Day, a day for credit unions to reflect on their history and commitment to their members and communities.

Sonoma Raceway Gets Skip Barber Racing School

Starting this November, Skip Barber Racing School will once again run best in class racing and driving programs at the iconic Sonoma Raceway.

14 North Bay Professionals to be Honored with Latino Business Leadership Awards

Congratulations to all of the member company winners.



Who We Are

Over thirty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call 707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org