Labor Economics
Policy Memo

Due Date: Monday, August 12 at 12:30pm

- The purpose of the memo is to provide research insights into a policy proposal. This document should serve two purposes. First, it should tell the reader what researchers have to say about the policy. Second, based on the research, it should argue either in favor or against the proposal.

- The memo should be 2-3 pages (must be typed up). This is not a hard limit. You can write more, but note that a reader's attention diminishes rapidly. You can choose whatever size font, spacing, formatting etc that you feel is appropriate.

- Plagiarism will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, copying directly from another student, a paper, or textbooks. Your phrasing must be your own and should demonstrate that you understand the answer. Plagiarism will result in receiving a grade of zero for this assignment.

- You may quote a paper or other reference, but you must: 1) cite your quotation, 2) keep your quotation limited to 1-2 sentences, and 3) add further explanation to the quotation *in your own words*.

Tips

- Give a brief overview of the proposal so that it is clear what you are discussing.

- Focus on how the policy can impact the labor market or other labor-related issues.

- Support your arguments with economic research and intuition. You will likely not find research that maps perfectly to the policy proposal. Fill in the gaps using your intuition.

- Do not focus on aspects like whether the policy has public support or on normative ideas like fairness or justice (not because they are unimportant, but because this is not the purpose of the memo).

- Practical limitations are important but do not get too bogged down in the details of feasibility. Convincing arguments use the "even if" approach. For example: "this policy is infeasible because of X. But even if it was feasible, it would still be a bad idea because of Y".

- You should give a recommendation about the policy. You can either argue just in favor or just against, or do the memo as a list of pros and cons and then argue which side outweighs the other. If you argue against, you should propose another policy and support your alternative. You can also propose a small modification of the proposal.

- You will need to find papers to learn about the topic and back up your argument. Use the papers in the syllabus as a starting point. NBER and IZA working papers are a great place to find recent research. IZA World of Labor and EfiP have well-written policy-focused articles. The Handbook of Labor Economics summarizes a lot of research by major topics. If you find a relevant paper, use it as a launching pad to find more research. Look at papers that it has cited *and* that have cited it (use Google Scholar's "cited by" feature). Be a little hesitant of papers that have very low citations and/or are published in not reputable journals.

Topics

This is a list of suggested topics. You can choose something that it is not on the list, but you have to run it by me first (Vox and Politico have great summaries of the candidates). Note that I wrote this assignment in June 2019. By the time you work on it, the candidates may have changed. You can still write about the policy, even if your candidate has dropped out (or flip-flopped on their position). Also note that many topics have proposals by several candidates, which may have slight variations. You can talk about one candidate's specific policy or group them together.

Policy	Candidates[1]	Link
$15 federal minimum wage	Warren, Harris, Klobuchar, O'Rourke, Castro, Hickenlooper	Link
Universal Basic Income (UBI)	Yang	Link
Ultra-Millionaire Tax	Warren	Link
Paid family leave	Gillibrand	Link
Tuition-free public college	Warren, Sanders	Link
Gender gap disclosure	Harris	Link
Jobs guarantee	Sanders, Booker, Gillibrand	Link
Expand EITC	Booker, Delaney, Harris, Klobuchar	Link
Baby bonds	Booker	Link
Reparations	Williamson	Link
Public defenders pay gap	Harris	Link
Affordable housing	Booker, Harris	Link
Break up Big Tech	Warren	Link

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[1]Not exhaustive