

CASEY C. MCQUILLAN

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OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

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Department of Economics
Princeton University
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GRADUATE STUDIES

Princeton University	2020-present
PhD Candidate in Economics	
Expected Completion Date: May 2026	

REFERENCES

Professor David Lee	Professor Ilyana Kuziemko	Professor Owen Zidar
Department of Economics	Department of Economics	Department of Economics
Princeton University	Princeton University	Princeton University
davidlee@princeton.edu	kuziemko@princeton.edu	ozidar@princeton.edu

PRIOR EDUCATION

Amherst College	2013-2018
B.A. in Economics and Mathematics, Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude	

FIELDS

Labor Economics, Public Finance, Applied Microeconomics

PUBLICATIONS

1. [The Health Wedge and Labor Market Inequality](#) with Amy Finkelstein, Owen Zidar, and Eric Zwick, *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, Spring 2023: 425–475.

JOB MARKET PAPER

[Incomplete and Endogenous Take-Up of Unemployment Insurance](#) with Brendan Moore, 2025.

Standard models of unemployment insurance (UI) focus on how benefit generosity affects the average claim duration, assuming perfect take-up. Yet, benefit receipt is highly incomplete, with estimates of take-up among eligible workers below 50 percent in the United States. We show that take-up is an important margin of response: If benefits become more generous, more workers claim benefits in addition to claimants remaining on benefits for longer. Using a sample of likely eligible workers, we leverage a regression kink design to identify the causal effect of weekly benefit level on take-up and total benefit duration. Our results suggest a 10 percent increase in the weekly benefit leads to a 4.8 percent increase in take-up, which drives a 6.4 percent increase in total benefit duration. Previous work did not account for a take-up response and thus underestimated the fiscal externality associated with raising benefit levels. Endogenous take-up has implications for UI policy: the wedge between the optimal benefit level and full insurance doubles; the value of spending to raise the benefit level decreases by 20 cents for every \$1.

WORKING PAPERS

- (i) [The Benefits of Unemployment Insurance for Marginally Attached Workers](#) with Brendan Moore, 2025.

Existing research documents that more generous unemployment insurance (UI) delays job finding with limited effects on job quality. This paper exploits the eligibility threshold to examine how UI receipt impacts job search for lower-income workers. Using employer-employee matched data from Washington State and a fuzzy regression discontinuity design, we find that UI receipt minimally delays re-employment but substantially improves labor market outcomes. UI increases cumulative hours worked by approximately 15 full-time weeks and earnings by \$14,000 in the two years following job loss, representing 37 percent and 50 percent increases, respectively. These gains are driven by improved job quality, as recipients experience longer tenure and higher wages with their next employer. Effects are larger for workers living near public employment offices, suggesting that access to re-employment services enhances search productivity. Expanding UI access by lowering the eligibility threshold is much more cost-effective than raising benefit levels or extending potential duration, as workers benefit from more stable, higher-paying re-employment that partially offsets its cost.

- (ii) [Barriers to Benefits: Unemployment Insurance Take-Up, Frictions, and Labor Market Consequences](#) with Brendan Moore, 2025.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) provides income support during job loss, yet take-up remains puzzlingly low, with only about half of eligible unemployed workers in the U.S. claiming benefits. We implement a large-scale field experiment among 50,000 recently unemployed, non-UI claiming workers in Washington State to study the causes and labor supply implications of incomplete take-up. The feature of the data that allows us to distinguish between misperception of eligibility and hassle costs is the effect of treatment on the UI rejection rate of those induced to apply. We experimentally vary whether letters include a destigmatizing message. Informational letters increased UI applications by 1.5 percentage points (80% relative to control), with effects concentrated among low-wage workers. We attribute the effect of generic informational letters on take-up to reduced hassle costs rather than improved eligibility perceptions. Destigmatizing letters induced more applications only from high-wage job seekers. Despite higher take-up, we can rule out negative effects of UI receipt on job search duration. These findings suggest that disproportionately low-wage workers were induced to apply because of reduced hassle costs but did not distort their search behavior while on UI.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Specialist, Employment Security Department in WA State	2022 - Present
Research Assistant to Prof. Owen Zidar	2021
Senior Research Analyst, Federal Reserve Bank of New York	2018 - 2020

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Presentations and Seminars (including scheduled)

Policy Impacts Conference at MIT	July 2025
W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research	November 2024
Stanford Institute for Theoretical Economics	August 2024
Tax Policy Colloquium at Loyola Marymount University	November 2023

Refereeing

American Economic Review: Insights

TEACHING

Princeton SPI507: Quantitative Analysis for Policymakers (Fall 2024)

HONORS, SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND GRANTS

Early Career Scholars Grant, Policy Impacts at MIT	November 2024
Program for Research on Inequality, Princeton University	February 2023
Graduate Research Fellowship, National Science Foundation	April 2022
Louis A. Simpson Graduate Fellowship, Princeton University	May 2021
Amherst Memorial Fellowship, Amherst College	April 2021
Computation in Economics Fellowship, NYU/Schmidt Futures	March 2019
Phi Beta Kappa Society, Amherst College	May 2018
Summa Cum Laude, Amherst College	May 2018

OTHER WRITINGS

1. [Real Inventory Slowdowns](#) with Richard Crump and David Lucca, *Liberty Street Economics*, (2019).
2. [Is the Recent Tax Reform Playing a Role in the Decline of Home Sales?](#) with Richard Peach, *Liberty Street Economics*, (2019).
3. [To Ban or Not To Ban: Regulating For-Profit Charter Schools](#), Amherst College Honors Thesis, (2018).
4. [Learning From Ferguson: Using Body Cameras and Participatory Governance to Improve Policing](#) with Lucas Turner-Owens, *Harvard Journal of Public African American Policy*, (2015).