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

This paper investigates how the generosity of unemployment insurance (UI) affects take-up and optimal policy design. Standard models of UI begin their analysis with benefit receipt, yet take-up is highly incomplete: only around half of eligible workers claim benefits in the United States. We develop a model with incomplete take-up explained by the hassle of applying. More generous benefits induce workers on the margin to claim benefits, creating a fiscal externality without providing additional insurance value. Our optimal policy condition extends the Baily-Chetty formula to include the take-up elasticity, which proves quantitatively important. Using administrative data from Washington State and a regression kink design (RKD), we find that a 10 percent increase in the weekly benefit increases take-up by 4.7 percent, which drives a 6.2 percent increase in the number of benefit payments. Previous work considers only the duration elasticity by conditioning on benefit receipt, ignoring the take-up response and thus underestimating the fiscal cost. Combining our theory and empirical results, we show that endogenous take-up reduces the optimal benefit level by 29 percent and the cost-effectiveness of raising benefits by 27 percent. Together, these results highlight that incomplete and endogenous take-up is a first-order consideration in the optimal design of social insurance.

WORKING PAPERS

(i) **The Benefits of Unemployment Insurance for Marginally Attached Workers** with Brendan Moore, 2025.

Existing research consistently finds that unemployment insurance (UI) benefits delay job finding with limited effects on job quality, but focuses on changes in UI generosity while holding fixed access to re-employment services. Using employer-employee matched data from Washington State and a fuzzy regression discontinuity design around the eligibility threshold for UI, we find that benefit 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 and Labor Market Effects** with Brendan Moore, 2025.

Unemployment insurance (UI) take-up is relatively low in the United States. We implement a large-scale field experiment among 50,000 likely unemployed individuals to study the causes and labor supply implications of incomplete UI take-up. Informational letters increased applications and receipt, with effects concentrated among low-wage workers. Rejection rates among treated applicants also increased: this suggests that the letters primarily reduced learning costs rather than improved eligibility beliefs. Randomized messages aimed at reducing free-rider stigma induced more applications, primarily among high-wage job seekers. Although prior work finds that more generous UI slows job finding, our take-up intervention modestly increased reemployment, as work-search requirements hastened job finding among recipients but also screened out applicants who were unwilling or unable to verify their search. We develop and estimate a structural job search model calibrated to the reduced form-experimental results to quantify these frictions and show that lower search-compliance costs yield the largest welfare gains for unemployed workers.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Specialist, Employment Security Department in WA State	2022 - 2025
Visiting Scholar, National Bureau of Economic Research	2023
Research Assistant to Professor Owen Zidar	2021
Senior Research Analyst, Federal Reserve Bank of New York	2018 - 2020

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Presentations and Seminars (including scheduled)

Seminar for Economics Department at Amherst College	October 2025
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	May 2018
Summa Cum Laude, Amherst College May 2018	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).

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