

# Sarah Robinson

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CONTACT INFORMATION	2015 North Hall Department of Economics University of California Santa Barbara, CA 93106	<i>Phone:</i> (805) 316-1377 <i>E-mail:</i> sarahrobinson@ucsb.edu <i>Website:</i> <a href="http://www.s-robinson.com">www.s-robinson.com</a>
CITIZENSHIP	U.S.	
RESEARCH FIELDS	Health Economics, Public Economics, Applied Microeconomics	
EDUCATION	<b>University of California, Santa Barbara</b> Ph.D., Economics <i>Dissertation Committee: Heather Royer (advisor), Youssef Benzarti, H.E. (Ted) Frech III, Alisa Tazhitdinova</i> M.A., Economics	Expected June 2023    2018
	<b>Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, CA</b> B.A., Philosophy, Politics & Economics, <i>magna cum laude</i>	2013
WORKING PAPERS	“Do Firms Avoid Health Insurance Mandates? Evidence from the Self-Funding of Employer Plans” ( <b>Job Market Paper</b> )	
(ABSTRACTS AT END)	“Corporate Political Spending and State Tax Policy: Evidence from Citizens United” with Cailin Slattery and Alisa Tazhitdinova ( <i>NBER Working Paper 30352</i> ) <b>(Revise &amp; Resubmit, Journal of Public Economics)</b>  “Geographic Variation in C-Sections in the United States: Trends, Correlates and Other Interesting Facts” with Heather Royer and David Silver <b>(Revise &amp; Resubmit, Journal of Labor Economics)</b>  “What Drives Tax Policy? Political, Institutional and Economic Determinants of State Tax Policy in the Past 70 Years” with Alisa Tazhitdinova ( <i>under review</i> )	
WORK IN PROGRESS	“Employer Choice of Health Insurance Plans and Premium Sharing” ( <i>FSRDC project approved by U.S. Census Bureau and IRS</i> )	
AFFILIATIONS	U.S. Census Bureau, Special Sworn Status Researcher	2022 – present
FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS	<b>National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA</b> Pre-Doctoral Fellow, Aging & Health Research  <u>University of California, Santa Barbara</u> Job Market Fellowship Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award Research Quarter Fellowship Gretler Fellowship	2021 – 2022    2022 2019, 2021 2019 2019

	Mortimer Andron Fellowship	2018 – 2022
	Distinction in Ph.D. Preliminary Exam, Microeconomics	2018
	Regents Fellowship	2017 – 2018
	<u>Claremont McKenna College</u>	
	Phi Beta Kappa	2013
	Edward J. Sexton PPE Fellow	2011 – 2013
	Dean's List	2010 – 2013
RESEARCH ASSISTANCE	Heather Royer & David Silver	2020 – 2021
	Youssef Benzarti & Alisa Tazhitdinova	2019
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	<u>University of California, Santa Barbara</u>	
	<i>* Average rating 1.3 (1 = highest, 5 = lowest)</i>	
	Instructor, Math Camp for Economics Ph.D. Students	Su. 2020
	Head Teaching Assistant, Economics 10A Microeconomic Theory	Sp. 2020
	Teaching Assistant, Economics 10A Microeconomic Theory (6 quarters)	2018 – 2022
	Teaching Assistant, Economics 134A Financial Management	W. & Sp. 2019
	<u>Claremont McKenna College</u>	
	Class Tutor, Economics 120 Statistics	F. 2012
PRESENTATIONS	All-California Labor Economics Conference ( <i>poster session</i> )	2022
	Online Public Finance Seminar Graduate Student Workshop	2022
	UCSB Applied Microeconomics Lunch	2021, 2022
	NBER Spring Public Economics Meeting ( <i>co-author presenting</i> )	2022
	AEA Annual Meeting ( <i>poster session</i> )	2022
	Mannheim Taxation	2021
WORKSHOPS	NBER Health Economics Research Bootcamp	2019
	7 <sup>th</sup> Lindau Meeting on Economic Sciences ( <i>successfully nominated by University of California but unable to attend</i> )	
REFEREEING	American Economic Journal: Economic Policy	
SERVICE	Mentor for First-Year Economics Ph.D. Students, UCSB	2018 – 2021
	Professional Development Committee, UCSB ( <i>co-founder</i> )	2019 – 2020
	Health Reading Group, UCSB ( <i>organizer</i> )	2019 – 2020
OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE	<b>Deloitte Consulting LLP, San Francisco, CA</b> <b>Strategy &amp; Operations</b>	
	<i>Consultant</i>	2015 – 2016
	<i>Business Analyst</i>	2013 – 2015

COMPUTER  
SKILLS

Stata, Python, Excel, PowerPoint, L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X (*advanced*)  
R, MATLAB (*basic*)

REFERENCES

**Heather Royer** (*advisor*)

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**Alisa Tazhitdinova**

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ADDITIONAL  
CONTACTS

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WORKING  
PAPERS –  
ABSTRACTS

**(Job Market Paper) “Do Firms Avoid Health Insurance Mandates?  
Evidence from the Self-Funding of Employer Plans”**

Fifty percent of the U.S. population gets health insurance through an employer, and roughly half of employers only offer one health plan. Therefore, the choices made by firms about what plan(s) to offer are critical to understanding the health insurance available to workers. This paper focuses on one dimension of the firm’s decision: whether to self-fund plans (meaning the firm bears the financial risk of claims itself). I study whether firms use self-funding to avoid complying with mandates to cover specific procedures or providers. Using administrative data on the health plans offered by firms and a difference-in-differences design, I find that new mandates increase rates of self-funding among smaller firms (100-249 employees) by 3.2 percentage points, an increase of 14.5%. The mandates do not appear to affect larger firms (250+ employees), who are more likely to already be self-funded in the pre-period. These results imply that new mandates can lead to long-lasting reductions in the proportion of firms that are bound by any state health insurance regulations, including all previously mandated benefits as well as premium taxes. [\[Link to paper\]](#)

**“Corporate Political Spending and State Tax Policy: Evidence from  
Citizens United” with Cailin Slattery and Alisa Tazhitdinova**

(*Revise & Resubmit, Journal of Public Economics*)

To what extent is U.S. state tax policy affected by corporate political contributions? The 2010 Supreme Court *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* ruling provides an exogenous shock to corporate campaign spending, allowing corporations to spend on elections in 23 states which previously had spending bans. Ten years after the ruling and for a wide range of outcomes, we are not able to identify economically or statistically significant effects of corporate independent expenditures on state tax policy, including tax rates, discretionary tax breaks, and tax revenues. [\[Link to paper\]](#)

**“Geographic Variation in C-Sections in the United States: Trends, Correlates and Other Interesting Facts” with Heather Royer and David Silver**

*(Revise & Resubmit, Journal of Labor Economics)*

We use U.S. natality data from 1989 to 2017 to investigate county-level geographic disparities in the use of C-section among first-birth singleton mothers. We document the existence and persistence of geographic variation in C-section across low and high- C-section risk mothers, the degree to which this variation correlates with Medicare spending, and the sensitivity of C-section use and infant and maternal health outcomes to C-section risk across counties. Our key finding is that counties with high C-section rates perform more C-sections across the entirety of the risk distribution yet have nearly equivalent or better outcomes than counties with less intensive C-section rates. [\[Link to paper\]](#)

**“What Drives Tax Policy? Political, Institutional and Economic Determinants of State Tax Policy in the Past 70 Years” with Alisa Tazhitdinova *(under review)***

We study U.S. state tax rules over the past 70 years to shed light on the determinants of U.S. state tax policy, generating three key results. First, we show that long-term tax trends are not consistent with Tiebout sorting and race-to-the-bottom competition models. Second, we document evidence of increasing polarization of tax rates between Democratic and Republican states in the 1970s and from 2000 onward. Third, we use machine learning techniques to show that the timing and magnitude of tax changes are not driven by federal changes, economic needs, state politics, institutional rules, neighbor competition, or demographics. Altogether, these factors explain less than 20% of observed tax variation.

[\[Link to paper\]](#)