SETH MURRAY
University of Maryland
Department of Economics
College Park, MD 20742
Phone: (650) 714-6340
Email: murrase@umd.edu
Website: http://econweb.umd.edu/~murray/

PLACEMENT DIRECTORS

Prof. Guido Kuersteiner	gkuerste@umd.edu	(301) 405-3493
Prof. Katharine Abraham	kabraham@umd.edu	(301) 405-3489
Prof. Nolan Pope	npope@umd.edu	(801) 995-9184

EDUCATION

Ph.D.	Economics, University of Maryland at College Park, expected May 2020
B.A.	Mathematics and Economics, Swarthmore College, 1998

FIELDS OF SPECIALIZATION

Primary: Macroeconomics
Secondary: Labor Economics

DISSERTATION

Essays on Wages and Employment
Committee: Prof. John Haltiwanger (Chair), Prof. Boragan Aruoba, Prof. Judith Hellerstein, Dr. Henry Hyatt

JOB MARKET PAPER

"Downward Nominal Wage Rigidity and Job Destruction"

This paper provides quasi-experimental evidence that downward nominal wage rigidity causes firms to destroy jobs in response to negative aggregate shocks. Using the unanticipated nature of the 2008 financial collapse in conjunction with heterogeneity in firms' seasonal patterns of nominal wage adjustment, I find the rate of job destruction in Q4 of 2008 increased nearly twice as much at U.S. firms more exposed to downward nominal wage rigidity simply because of the calendar quarter in which they historically tended to raise workers' nominal wages. I find that the increase in the aggregate job destruction rate in 2008:Q4 would have been 231% smaller if all firms could have had the wage flexibility of the firms least exposed to downward nominal wage rigidity because of their typical raise quarter. This empirical finding runs counter to the intuitive reasoning behind the Barro Critique (1977): downward nominal wage rigidity should not cause job destruction since this would require that workers and firms ignore mutually advantageous nominal wage cuts. I reconcile my empirical finding with the Barro Critique by developing a model of a firm wherein downward nominal wage rigidity causes the firm to lay off a positive-surplus worker because a profit constraint forces the firm to choose between laying off the worker or cutting the nominal wages of the worker and one or more coworkers. The firm optimally chooses to lay off a positive-surplus worker not because of the worker's own resistance to a nominal wage cut (which would violate the Barro Critique), but because the certain loss in firm surplus from laying off the worker is less than the expected loss in firm surplus from a higher-surplus coworker being more likely to quit after a nominal wage cut.

OTHER RESEARCH PAPERS
"Cyclical Labor Market Sorting," 2019, with Leland Crane and Henry Hyatt

"Aggregate Labor Market Fluidity," 2019, with Henry Hyatt and Kristin Sandusky

"Retirements, Vacancy Chains, and the Decline in Employer-to-Employer Transitions," 2019

"An Empirical Evaluation of Theories of Wage Adjustment", work in progress

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
Instructor, Econometrics II (undergraduate), University of Maryland, Summer 2019

RESEARCH AND RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE
Research Assistant, Center for Economic Studies, The U.S. Census Bureau, Fall 2016–present
Research Assistant, Prof. Will Dobbie, Princeton University, Summer 2015-Summer 2016
Founder and President, various technology startups, Winter 2000- Summer 2013
Economic Consultant, Ernst & Young, Boston, Summer 1998 – Winter 2000

GRANTS AND AWARDS
Roger and Alicia Betancourt Fellowship in Applied Economics, Fall 2019
Retirement Dissertation Fellowship, Center for Retirement Research, Boston College, 2018
Adam's Prize for Best Senior Thesis, Economics Department, Swarthmore College, Spring 1998

CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS
2019: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau
2018: Econometrics Society North American Summer Meeting, Western Economics Association Meeting, Bates College, NBER Summer Institute (coauthor presented), American Economic Association meeting (coauthor presented)
2017: U.S. Census Bureau, NBER Summer Institute (coauthor presented)

REFERENCES
Prof. John Haltiwanger	University of Maryland	haltiwan@econ.umd.edu	(301) 405-3504
Prof. Boragan Aruoba	University of Maryland	aruoba@econ.umd.edu	(301) 405-3508
Prof. Judith Hellerstein	University of Maryland	hellerst@econ.umd.edu	(301) 405-3545