CHEPS

CENTER FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS & POLICY STUDIES

INSIDE:

New Frontiers in Applied Microeconomics and Public Policy Analysis

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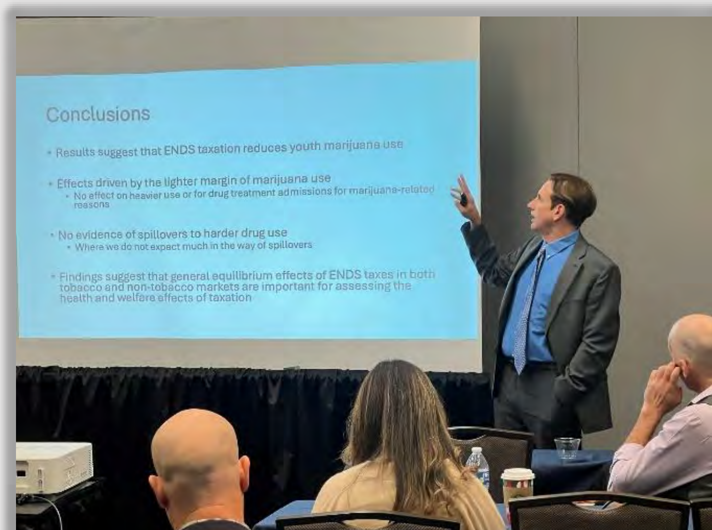
Letter from the Director and Chairman

Dear Friends of CHEPS:

As the Center for Health Economics and Policy Studies (CHEPS) enters its ninth year and I begin my third as Chairman of the Economics Department (ECON), I feel immense gratitude to all of the students, faculty, and staff who have helped to make CHEPS-ECON one of the most intellectually dynamic applied microeconomics and public policy research environments in the nation.

Over the last year, Center affiliates attained publications in leading peer-reviewed journals in economics, public policy, and science, including such outlets as the *Review of Economics and Statistics,* the *Journal of Human Resources,* the *Journal of Law and Economics,* the *Journal of Public Economics*, the *Journal of Health Economics,* the *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management,* and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. The Center's youngest faculty affiliates — Julia Zhu and Thiago de Lucena, both Assistant Professors of Economics — have achieved important successes with their job market papers: Thiago received an acceptance at the *Journal of Human Resources,* and Julia received a revise-and-resubmit at the *Economic Journal*. We are so proud of them for these achievements.



With respect to the Center's most recent pre-publication work on the economics of risky behaviors, we have had several working papers published as part of the prestigious National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) working paper series. Our scholarship, including the graduate students and postdoctoral fellows who help to produce it, are supported by external grants from Global Action to End Smoking, the Charles Koch Foundation, and the University of Wisconsin (via the Social Security Administration). We are very grateful for their support, as well as ongoing support from the College of Arts & Letters and the Division of Research and Innovation at San Diego State University. Special thanks are owed to our College's most recent Deans, Former Dean Ronnee Schreiber and Current Dean Todd Butler, as well as Vice President Hala Madanat, for being stalwart supporters of the Center's research and mentoring activities.

Looking to the future, CHEPS is excited to welcome three new affiliates for the 2025-26 Academic Year. Kyutaro Matsuzawa proves you can go home again: he is “coming home” to his alma mater, but this time as the newest tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics. Kyu was an undergraduate, graduate, and predoc student at San Diego State before attending the University of Oregon, where he received a Ph.D. in Economics. Kyu is a labor and health economist with research interests in the economics of crime. He joins us with a fresh publication at the *Journal of Law and Economics* and a revise-and-resubmit at the *Review of Economics and Statistics*. Kyu will also be joining the leadership team at the Center, serving in the dual roles of Chief of Staff and Constable of our growing Economics of Crime division. He is a true inspiration.

We congratulate two of the Center’s most recent predoctoral fellows who recently completed their M.S. degrees in Economics. Tony Chuo, who already has a revise-and-resubmit at the Journal of Health Economics and is a co-author on two new working papers (both of which are NBER working papers), will be attending the Ph.D. program in Economics at the University of Texas-Austin beginning in the 2025-26 Academic Year. Christian Pryfogle, who has contributed on a number of research fronts while a predoc, will begin a Ph.D. program in Economics at the University of Oregon. We wish them continued success in their professional development.

This year’s issue of *CHEPS Magazine* covers many of our achievements: research papers, seminar events, workshops, and conference experiences. Our ‘CHEPS By the Numbers” provides an accounting of our work:

- 199 Research Seminars have been held by researchers visiting from institutions such as Cornell University, Yale University, Dartmouth College, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Georgia, Syracuse University, the University of Rochester, and the University of Texas-Austin.

- 42 graduate, undergraduate, and postdoctoral students have received funding for research-related activities.

- 20 former M.S./M.A. and B.A. Economics students have been accepted to Ph.D. programs (18) or Predoctoral Programs (2) at such institutions as Cornell University, the University of Texas-Austin, University of California-Irvine, the

University of Illinois-Chicago, the University of Minnesota, the University of Notre Dame, the University of California-Santa Barbara, Colorado State University, the University of Oregon, Fordham University, the University of California-Davis, Peking University, and Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium).

- 110 peer-reviewed publications have been achieved at high quality economics, medical, and policy journals such as the *Review of Economics and Statistics, Journal of Human Resources*, the *Journal of Public Economics,* the *Journal of Law and Economics,* the *Journal of Health Economics*, the *Economic Journal*, *the Journal of Applied Econometrics*, *Health Economics, Journal of Urban Economics, JAMA: Psychiatry,* and the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.

- 33 working papers published by the NBER.

- 72 academic research conferences and workshops at which CHEPS Affiliates have presented their cutting-edge scholarship.

I hope you will consider donating to our Center and joining us each Thursday at 3:30 p.m. PT via Zoom (or in person in the Arts & Letters Building in Room 660 if you are on the San Diego State campus). And now, enjoy reading about the research accomplishments of our affiliates in the 2025-26 issue of *CHEPS Magazine*!

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Sabia
Director, Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies
Chairman, Department of Economics

Inside this Issue

Research Highlights

Do Vaping Taxes Tip the Scale?

(National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper)

With obesity affecting nearly three in four U.S. adults and one in three children, researchers are examining a wide range of policy levers to address this growing public health issue. One area of interest is the relationship between nicotine use and body weight. While nicotine is known to suppress appetite, traditional cigarette smoking carries significant health risks. The rise of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), such as e-cigarettes, introduced a potentially less harmful alternative, but also raised concerns about youth use, prompting many states to implement ENDS-specific taxes.

A recent study by **Charles Courtemanche**, **Yang Liang**, **Anthony Chuo**, **Tessie Krishna**, and **Joseph J. Sabia** explores whether taxing ENDS could have unintended consequences by limiting access to nicotine and potentially contributing to weight gain. Using nationally representative data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), the researchers estimated the impact of state-level ENDS tax changes on body weight.

Contrary to expectations, the study finds that higher ENDS taxes do not lead to increased obesity. Instead, they are associated with modest but statistically significant reductions in body weight, especially among females. A one-dollar per milliliter increase in ENDS taxes leads to a 1–2 percentage-point drop in obesity among female youth and a smaller but meaningful decline among adult women. While results for males are similar, they are smaller and not statistically distinguishable from zero.

The researchers propose several possible explanations: higher ENDS taxes may drive some youths toward cigarettes, offsetting reductions in nicotine intake from ENDS, while also reducing use of alcohol and marijuana, which are often tied to poor dietary choices and weight gain.

Nicotine Vaping and Mental Health

(National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper)

Some tobacco control advocates claim that the growing U.S. youth mental health crisis and high rates of youth electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) use may be causally linked. Some groups, such as *Truth Initiative*, have suggested that the adoption of policies designed to curb youth ENDS use, through measures such as higher taxes, might also improve teen and young adult mental health. A new study by **Chad Cotti**, **Tessie Krishna**, **Johanna Catherine Maclean**, **Erik Nesson**, and **Joseph J**. **Sabia** investigates this claim using three major national datasets: the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), and the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH).

The researchers examine how U.S. ENDS regulations — including taxes, purchase age laws, online sales restrictions, and indoor vaping bans — affected youth mental health. They use a difference-in-differences approach with two-way fixed effects to estimate causal impacts on indicators such as depressive symptoms, suicide ideation, and suicide attempts among high schoolers, as well as poor mental health days among young adults aged 18–24.

The results are consistent and clear: ENDS taxes have no statistically or economically meaningful effects on youth mental health. These findings remain robust across data sources, years, and model specifications. Similar results hold for young adults, where the mental health effects of ENDS taxes are small, inconsistent, and sensitive to analytical choices. They also find that this “null” result largely extends to other U.S. ENDS regulations that restrict access to e-cigarettes.

The authors reconcile their findings with those of the prior public health literature, which found evidence of a positive correlation between nicotine vaping and adverse mental health. They argue that the prior public health literature may have been documenting either “reverse causality” (whereby youths’ mental health affected their vaping behavior) or a “difficult-to-measure third factor” associated with both mental health and vaping behavior. For instance, those youths who grow up in more emotionally and financially deprived households may be more likely to both vape nicotine and have symptoms of depression. The authors conclude that policymakers concerned about adolescent well-being may need to look beyond vaping regulations and invest more directly in expanding access to mental health services.

E-Cigarette Taxation and Queer Youth

(National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper)

Taxing vaping products is a popular strategy to curb youth nicotine use—but new research suggests this approach may not work equally well for all teens. A recent working paper by **Anthony Chuo**, **Chad D. Cotti**, **Charles J. Courtemanche**, **Johanna Catherine Maclean**, **Erik T. Nesson**, and **Joseph J. Sabia** finds that e-cigarette taxes are significantly less effective among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning (LGBQ) youth than among their heterosexual peers.

Using data from the State Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) between 2015 and 2023, the study shows that while vaping rates have fluctuated for all teens, LGBQ youth consistently report higher ENDS use. They also face markedly higher rates of mental health challenges, including depression, bullying, and suicidal thoughts.

The researchers found that a one-dollar increase in ENDS taxes leads to a meaningful decline in vaping among heterosexual teens, particularly on the more intensive margin of use (e.g., use of ENDS products on at least 20 of the last 30 days), but has little effect for LGBQ teens. In fact, increases in the ENDS tax widened the gap in frequent vaping rates between the two groups by one to two percentage points. The authors suggest this may be due to "minority stress," with LGBQ teens using nicotine as a coping mechanism, making them less responsive to price-based deterrents.

Additional analyses found that ENDS taxes had no impact on vaping among LGBQ teens experiencing bullying, sadness, or suicidal ideation. Other policies showed more promise: flavor bans appeared to reduce frequent and daily use in this group, while Tobacco-21 laws had weaker effects. The authors recommend expanding public health efforts beyond taxation. Culturally tailored messaging, inclusive mental health services, and education on healthy coping strategies may prove more effective in addressing the root causes of nicotine use among queer teens.

Do School Vaping Restrictions Work?

(National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper)

With teen vaping on the rise in recent years, many U.S. states have passed laws banning the use of e-cigarettes on school grounds. Such laws are designed to reduce students' exposure to secondhand e-cigarette aerosol (which may be harmful to one's respiratory health) as well as reduce youth nicotine vaping overall. However, there is little empirical evidence on the effectiveness of school vaping restrictions.

New research by **Tony Chuo** and **Nikolaos Prodromidis** contributes to this gap in the empirical literature. The researchers used data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and other national sources to examine vaping trends among high school students between 2015 and 2023. Leveraging variation in the timing and location of school-based vaping restrictions (SVRs), they employed a difference-in-differences approach to estimate the impact of these laws. Their findings were striking: bans on vaping inside elementary and secondary (K-12) school buildings did not significantly reduce teen e-cigarette use. Their effectiveness did not improve even when the bans were extended to the outdoor areas on school campuses.

Even more comprehensive versions of the law, with higher penalties or 24/7 campus enforcement, showed similarly weak results. A key explanation, the authors argue, is poor enforcement. Many students continued vaping at school despite the bans, and surveys of school principals revealed inconsistent compliance.

However, when school vaping bans were paired with broader indoor vaping restrictions, such as those covering restaurants and workplaces, the effects were more encouraging. These more comprehensive policies were linked to reductions in frequent and habitual use, suggesting that vaping restrictions are more effective when they remove multiple access points. What is the authors' takeaway? School-based vaping bans may send a message, but without strong enforcement and community-wide support, they are unlikely to change behavior on their own.

Alcohol Exclusion Provisions in Health Insurance and Ex-Ante Moral Hazard

(*National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper*)

Alcohol misuse remains a major public health and economic concern in the United States. Between 2015 and 2019, excessive alcohol use contributed to over 140,000 deaths and $340 billion in annual costs, including healthcare, crime, lost productivity, and traffic accidents.

To discourage risky drinking, 16 states implemented Alcohol Exclusion Provisions (AEPs), laws that allowed private insurers to deny claims for injuries sustained while under the influence. The idea was to deter dangerous behavior through financial penalties. However, over time, these laws backfired. Evidence showed AEPs failed to reduce problem drinking and created unintended barriers in medical settings. Fearing claim denials, physicians often avoided alcohol screening or referrals, contradicting federal health guidelines that emphasize early detection and treatment of substance use.

Recognizing these flaws, health organizations like the NAIC and APHA called for change. Since 2000, 16 states have repealed AEPs and replaced them with PDHIAs—laws that prevent insurers from denying coverage for alcohol-related injuries. These reforms aim to reduce stigma, improve care access, and support recovery.

Still, some critics warned of potential “ex-ante moral hazard,” where removing financial risk might encourage more dangerous drinking. Others believed PDHIAs might lead to better outcomes by empowering providers to intervene without penalty.

To test these theories, **Baris Yoruk**, **Dhaval Dave**, **Tessie Krishna**, and **Joseph Sabia** conducted the first nationwide study of PDHIAs. Analyzing alcohol consumption, crime, traffic deaths, insurance coverage, and premiums, they found no increase in risky behavior or insurance costs. In fact, the study observed modest improvements in some problem behaviors, hinting at better treatment access and reduced stigma.

The bottom line: AEPs didn’t curb drinking and discouraged care. PDHIAs, in contrast, offer a more supportive path, balancing public health goals with compassion and practical access to treatment.

Did Robots Cause a Crime Wave?

(*National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper*)

In one of the first large-scale U.S. studies connecting automation and public safety, Professor **Yang Liang** of San Diego State University investigates an unsettling side effect of technological progress: crime. Co-authored with Professors **Joseph J. Sabia** and **Dhaval M. Dave**, the paper explores how exposure to robotics in U.S. manufacturing may unintentionally raise property crime rates.

Using a novel identification strategy that ties U.S. county-level automation trends to robotics adoption in European industries, the authors isolate plausibly exogenous variation in local robotics exposure. Their instrumental variables analysis finds that each additional robot per 1,000 workers led to a 4 to 5% increase in property crime arrests, especially theft and motor vehicle-related offenses. Crucially, the study finds no corresponding rise in violent crime.

What drives this increase in property crime? The authors point to robotics-induced job displacement and earnings losses among low-skilled workers. These labor market shocks were most pronounced during the early 2000s, when automation spread rapidly across the manufacturing sector. A back-of-the-envelope estimate suggests that this robotics expansion contributed to over $322 million in additional crime-related social costs nationwide between 2004 and 2010.

This study does not argue that robotics expansions should be prevented, but the findings of this study suggest important distributional impacts and unintended external costs (in the short run). While robots can boost productivity and long-run growth, they may also impose short-run burdens on displaced workers and their communities.

As artificial intelligence and robotics continue to reshape the workplace, this study offers a timely reminder: technological progress should be accompanied by thoughtful policies that address its unintended human consequences.

Schooling and Youth Crime

(National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper)

While schools are widely regarded as spaces for learning and development, new research by CHEPS affiliates **Benjamin Hansen**, **Kyutaro Matsuzawa**, and **Joseph Sabia** reveals that in-person schooling may also carry unexpected social costs, particularly in the form of increased youth violence. Drawing on data from nationwide crime reports, victimization surveys, and hospital records, the study finds that when K–12 schools resume in-person instruction, incidents of violent crime involving juveniles rise significantly—by as much as 28 percent. Crucially, these increases are not limited to arrest records. The pattern also emerges in self-reported victimization data and assault-related hospital visits, suggesting a genuine escalation in harm rather than changes in law enforcement behavior. To identify causal effects, the authors use anonymized cell phone data to track daily foot traffic to schools across thousands of U.S. counties.

The variation in school reopening timelines—especially during the COVID-19 pandemic—serves as a natural experiment. When schools were closed, youth violence declined sharply. As in-person instruction resumed, violence levels rebounded. The mechanisms appear to reflect both a "concentration effect," wherein the sheer density of students raises the likelihood of conflict, and the quality of peer interactions, which varies with factors like class size and anti-bullying policies. Indeed, the largest increases in violence occurred in jurisdictions with larger pupil-teacher ratios and weaker bullying prevention laws. Most incidents took place during school hours and on school grounds, peaking around dismissal time. Importantly, the rise was limited to violent offenses; property crime did not increase. This distinction suggests that interpersonal dynamics, rather than opportunity-driven behavior, are at the core of the observed trends.

The authors estimate that full in-person schooling generates approximately $233 million per month in social costs due to juvenile violent crime. While these findings do not argue against the value of in-person education, they underscore the need for targeted school-based interventions to reduce peer conflict and improve safety. Strategic investments in classroom management, student support services, and bullying prevention may help mitigate these unintended consequences while preserving the long-term benefits of education.

The Impact of Florida's Juvenile Civil Citation Program on Recidivism

Florida's approach to juvenile justice has evolved—from the punitive policies of the 1980s to a renewed focus on rehabilitation. A key reform is the Juvenile Civil Citation Program, which diverts first-time misdemeanor offenders away from formal arrest and into community-based interventions. Instead of entering the justice system, eligible youth who admit guilt receive a citation and complete requirements like community service, restitution, or counseling. Upon successful completion, their record is cleared from public view.

In a new study, **Tessie Krishna** evaluates the program's effectiveness using administrative data from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice from 2000 to 2018. The study applies robust methods, including difference-in-differences and instrumental variables, to measure impacts on two-year recidivism rates.

The findings are compelling. Eligible youth in counties with the program were 15 to 57 percent less likely to reoffend. Among those who actually received a citation, recidivism dropped by 32 to 38 percent. The effects were strongest in Miami-Dade County—where 78 percent of eligible youth received citations—compared to under 38 percent statewide. Higher implementation rates were linked to larger reductions in recidivism.

The program not only avoids unnecessary system contact but also enforces accountability. Participants must remain crime-free for a year, and failure to comply can trigger formal processing. This balance of support and structure appears key to its success. Cost savings are another potential benefit. A 2007–2008 Miami-Dade report found that civil citation participants cost far less than those in traditional diversion or detention, suggesting that wider use of the program could reduce system costs significantly.

While long-term outcomes like education and employment remain to be studied, the results suggest that civil citations offer a promising alternative to arrest—reducing recidivism while promoting rehabilitation over punishment.

The Woman in the Arena: Nonsexual Harassment on a Male-Dominated Field

Over the past 60 years, women's entry into Western labor markets has profoundly reshaped workplace interactions, coinciding with increased scrutiny of bullying and harassment behaviors. While workplace harassment has been an expanding field of research, real-world causal evidence of disparities in harassment across genders remains limited.

This study, authored by **Thiago de Lucena**, provides causal evidence of gender-based nonsexual harassment in the workplace by analyzing the treatment of female referees in Brazil's professional male soccer league. It draws on over 1,200 match reports from the 2017 and 2018 seasons, which marked the first notable increase in female referees in Brazil's top professional soccer divisions. Given the immense popularity and competitiveness of soccer in Brazil, referees operate under high pressure and scrutiny.

The study leverages the quasi-random assignment of referees to matches and employs fixed effects models to compare harassment faced by female and male referees. It also introduces a simple behavioral model to explore players' decisions to engage in harassment. Findings reveal that female assistant referees received, on average, 0.365 more disciplinary warnings (yellow cards) per game, about a 65% increase primarily for excessive protesting, compared to their male counterparts.

Importantly, the introduction of Video Assistant Referees (VAR) in 2018 fundamentally altered match dynamics by reducing the uncertainty around referee decisions. This diminished the incentive to protest or harass referees. The data show that harassment disparities fell by nearly 0.5 warnings per game after VAR was implemented, effectively eliminating the gender gap in harassment.

These results suggest that male players' harassment behavior is largely driven by strategic incentives rather than intrinsic bias or differences in referee performance. The study offers novel evidence on gender dynamics in high-stakes environments and highlights how uncertainty can amplify harassment toward women, potentially contributing to gender gaps in leadership or competitive roles.

Acceptance of Same-Sex Couples and Location Choices

Same-sex couples in the United States are not concentrated evenly across the map. San Francisco leads major cities with about 3 percent of cohabiting couples being same-sex, while Detroit has just 1 percent. Similar patterns show up in smaller cities. Ithaca, NY, attracts many same-sex couples, while Yuma, AZ, has far fewer. Many factors shape where same-sex couples live, yet local attitudes toward them have been overlooked.

This study by **Jooyoung Kim** builds a city-level measure of acceptance using survey answers from the General Social Survey, voting patterns, and local demographics. To isolate cause from correlation, Kim turned to history: counties that hosted more evangelical churches in 1952 tend, even today, to be less accepting of same-sex relationships. Those church counts serve as a natural experiment, letting Kim separate genuine acceptance effects from other city characteristics.

The study finds that social acceptance is a powerful factor in determining where college-educated same-sex couples choose to live, comparable to a 1.5% wage increase for each percentage-point rise in local acceptance. If all cities had the same level of acceptance, places like Memphis would see their share of same-sex couples double, while San Francisco would lose nearly half.

Same-sex couples tend to be highly educated and workforce-attached, meaning their presence directly boosts productivity. Their clustering in inclusive cities also signals openness, an attractive quality for skilled workers and firms.

The findings suggest that fostering inclusion isn't just a moral stance, but an economic strategy. By quantifying how acceptance influences location decisions, the study reveals how social attitudes can reshape the geography of human capital. It also deepens conversations about political and educational polarization, showing how the cultural climate drives migration and economic development.

Why do Same-Sex Couples Live Downtown?

Same-sex couples in the U.S. are almost twice as likely as different-sex couples to live in a city's central neighborhood (29% vs.16%). This study explores why they choose downtown over the suburbs. Same-sex couples, on average, earn more as couples and have far fewer children. Higher incomes make long commutes feel costlier, while not having kids means less need for big suburban homes or top-ranked school districts in suburban neighborhoods.

This makes downtown living a longer daily drive. Downtown amenities also matter. Downtowns pack in restaurants, nightlife, arts, and walkable streets, amenities that appeal especially to adults without children. Urban cores are also more diverse and generally more accepting of LGB residents. A sense of safety and belonging amplifies the pull. Regressions motivated by an urban model show that children matter most.

Having kids lowers the probability of living downtown by 5 to 13 percentage points, with the largest drop for same-sex male couples. Also, a 10% income increase raises the chance of living downtown for child-free same-sex couples (≈ 0.3 pp) but does not entice child-free different-sex couples and actually nudges families with kids outward. Related to local culture, downtowns with fewer evangelical churches relative to their suburbs—a proxy for higher acceptance—host more same-sex couples, but these church counts have no bearing on different-sex households. Same-sex couples are, on average, highly educated and firmly attached to the labor force. Their downtown concentration signals openness, helping urban cores lure other skilled workers and innovative firms. The findings lend empirical weight to the long-held view that "gayborhoods" spark or speed up gentrification and downtown revitalization.

Are Gays with Disabilities Underserved? Evidence on Social Security Take-Up

More than 70 million American adults—nearly three in ten—live with a disability, whether it's a mobility challenge, a sensory impairment, or a cognitive hurdle. Beyond the daily obstacles, the financial strain can be crushing; medical bills pile up while work opportunities shrink, pushing many into poverty.

Health risks often compound these struggles. Disabled people face higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and long COVID than those without disabilities. Securing consistent medical care can be a battle, treatments may be unaffordable, and discrimination in clinics or hospitals only widens the gap.

The Social Security Administration offers two main safety nets. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) provides monthly benefits of up to $3,822 (2024 dollars) to more than 7 million working-age adults who've paid into the system but can no longer work. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) supports about 7.4 million people, including disabled adults and seniors over 65, with benefits of up to $943 for individuals or $1,415 for couples. Roughly one-third of SSI recipients also collect SSDI, highlighting the depth of financial need.

Among the roughly 8 percent of U.S. adults who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, disabilities are even more common than among straight adults. One might expect higher rates of SSDI and SSI take-up in this group, especially given their elevated health challenges, labor market discrimination, and historic barriers to marriage equality. Yet **Dhaval Dave**, **Gokhan Kumpas**, and **Joseph Sabia** find same-sex coupled adults with disabilities are less likely to receive these benefits than different-sex couples in similar circumstances, even after accounting for income, household composition, and marital status.

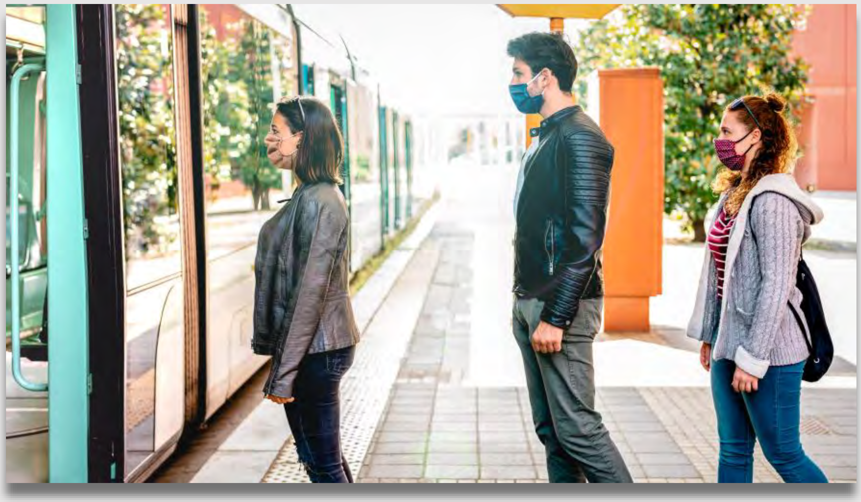
Researchers point to several possible obstacles: fewer doctor referrals for disability evaluations, limited outreach by the SSA into LGB communities, and a deep-rooted mistrust of government agencies. Whatever the causes, the outcome is clear: being both disabled and part of a sexual minority in America today can increase the risk of slipping through the cracks of our most basic social safety net.

Why did Social Security Disability Claims Fall During the Pandemic Recession?

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) offer vital income support for Americans with disabilities, especially during recessions.

Normally, applications for SSDI surge when unemployment rises, but in the COVID-19 downturn—when jobless claims briefly hit 14.8 percent—new disability filings stayed flat. Scholars and policymakers have suggested many reasons: closed SSA offices, staffing shortages that slowed processing, fewer medical screenings, a higher death toll among disabled individuals, and expanded unemployment benefits that eased financial pressure.

This study uses SSA administrative records, Oxford University's pandemic policy tracker, and anonymized smartphone data to gauge how state-level health measures and local economic shocks influenced SSDI and SSI claims. We find that strict pandemic policies—stay-at-home orders, business closures, travel bans, and limits on gatherings—caused new disability filings to drop by 15 to 20 percent. Event-study tests confirm these declines happened immediately after policy changes and weren't driven by preexisting trends.



The impact varied across communities. In high-poverty counties where SSA offices shut down and broadband access was scarce, take-up fell even more sharply, pointing to reduced access as a key barrier. Conversely, areas that suffered deeper economic slowdowns saw higher disability claims: a 10 percent drop in local mobility corresponded to a 1 to 3-percent increase in program participation. Over time, as local economies rebounded, these gains grew, suggesting that economic recovery helped counteract the hurdles created by health restrictions.

In sum, while pandemic restrictions unintentionally limited access to disability benefits, negative economic shocks still pushed some to seek support. Understanding these dynamics can guide future efforts to ensure that those who need help most can access benefits to which they are entitled.

Paid Sick Leave Mandates and Social Security Disability Benefits

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) are key safety net programs in the U.S., supporting older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their dependents. SSI is a need-based program, while SSDI eligibility requires a sufficient work history and prior Social Security tax contributions. Despite their importance, the application process for these programs is often burdensome, involving lengthy forms and in-person visits to SSA offices—barriers that are especially difficult for working individuals.

Labor policies that improve job flexibility, such as Paid Sick Leave (PSL) mandates, may ease access to these benefits by giving workers more time and security to engage in the application process. Prior research has shown that PSL mandates increase coverage and lead to more time off for reasons beyond illness, including caregiving and administrative tasks.

An ongoing study by a team of researchers led by **Brandy Lipton** and **Anwar Assamidanov** (and including **Christian Pryfogle** and **Joseph Sabia**) investigates whether PSL mandates influence participation in SSI and SSDI programs. Using data from the American Community Survey, SSA's Monthly Operating Workload (MOWL), and annual SSI State and County Recipients reports, the study finds preliminary evidence that PSL mandates are associated with an increase in SSI claims. This supports the hypothesis that greater workplace flexibility enables more individuals to complete the application process. Further work is underway to assess whether these policies also affect total participation and SSDI applications.

Pretextual Stop Restrictions and Policing: Evidence from Los Angeles

As cities across the U.S. reevaluate the role of traffic enforcement in public safety, a new study by **Kyutaro Matsuzawa** offers timely insights into the effects of limiting pretextual police stops—those initiated for minor infractions with the aim of investigating unrelated criminal activity. Using a policy change implemented by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in March 2022, Matsuzawa evaluates how restrictions on these stops shaped officer behavior, racial disparities, and public safety outcomes.

The LAPD policy raised the bar for conducting pretextual stops, requiring officers to articulate a clear threat to public safety before pulling drivers over for minor offenses like broken taillights or missing registration stickers. Leveraging a combination of regression discontinuity and synthetic difference-in-differences designs, the study finds that likely pretextual stops dropped by 30%, with no corresponding decline in total stops—suggesting that officers substituted toward other traffic enforcement actions. This shift aligns with multitasking theory in public sector work, where agents respond to shifts in oversight by reallocating effort across tasks.

The policy led to significant reductions in stops involving Black and Hispanic drivers—by 15 to 17% and 10%, respectively—without increasing crime, arrests, or traffic accidents. While the number of searches and contraband findings declined, there was no change in contraband seizures, and seizure rates actually improved. Further, warnings fell while citations rose, hinting at a tradeoff between reduced discretionary stops and stricter traffic enforcement.

These findings suggest that pretextual stop restrictions can reduce racial disparities without compromising public safety. Matsuzawa's analysis adds nuance to the ongoing debate about policing reform: while officers adapted by shifting their focus, the policy's targeted constraints improved equity and preserved effectiveness. As other jurisdictions consider similar reforms, Los Angeles may offer a roadmap for balancing public accountability with safety priorities.

Access to Child Care and Employee Retention in the U.S. Military

This paper, by new U.S. Air Force Academy Professor **Alexander Chesney**, examines how access to affordable childcare influences workforce retention, specifically within the U.S. military. Using detailed personnel data combined with localized childcare market characteristics, the study provides robust evidence that high childcare costs and limited availability significantly increase the likelihood of military personnel separating from service upon the expiration of their enlistment contracts.

The research leverages the unique personnel assignment system within the military, which assigns members to bases largely independent of personal preference. This creates an ideal setting for identifying the causal impact of childcare costs on retention. The findings show that military parents stationed in high-cost childcare areas are 9% more likely to leave military service compared to non-parents, with the most pronounced effects observed among high-skilled personnel and those in occupations with demanding, inflexible schedules.

Further analysis reveals significant heterogeneity in how childcare constraints affect different groups within the military. Single parents—especially mothers—demonstrate higher sensitivity to childcare costs and availability, facing greater economic pressure and limited flexibility, which drives higher separation rates. Occupational characteristics such as long or irregular working hours, strict deadlines, and limited autonomy further exacerbate the childcare burden, particularly for single-parent households.

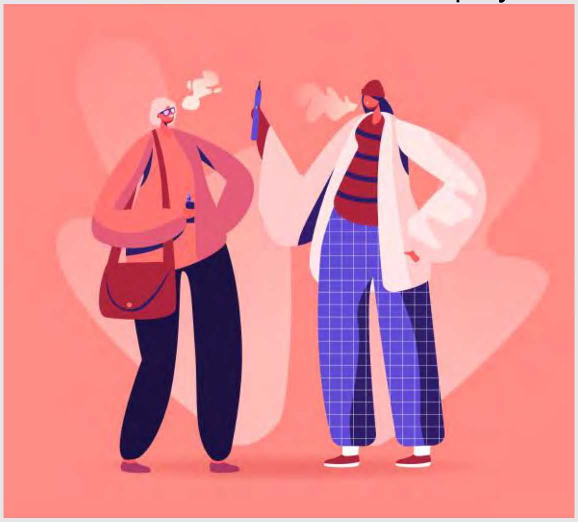
This study underscores childcare affordability and accessibility as critical determinants of labor market behavior, highlighting important policy implications for enhancing workforce stability. Suggested policy responses include expanding military-affiliated childcare facilities, increasing targeted childcare subsidies, and establishing partnerships with civilian childcare providers in high-cost regions. These insights contribute to broader discussions on how childcare policies shape employment outcomes and provide actionable guidance for organizations aiming to improve retention among employees with family responsibilities.

E-Cigarette Regulation and Risk Beliefs

The regulation of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), including e-cigarettes, has sparked increasing debate over their public health implications and the role of government in shaping consumer perceptions. Although these regulations are designed to reduce harm, they have sometimes unintentionally contributed to misinformation about the relative risks of e-cigarettes versus traditional cigarettes, which has deepened existing misperceptions among the public. As a result, the debate surrounding ENDS regulation continues to evolve, with various stakeholders raising concerns over the efficacy of these measures and the potential unintended consequences they may have on consumer behavior.

Recent research, such as that by **Diletta Migliaccio**, sheds light on how imperfect information affects consumer decision-making, particularly in the context of substitution between traditional cigarettes and e-cigarettes. This study emphasizes the complexities of public perception and the challenges regulators face when attempting to mitigate the risks associated with smoking alternatives.

To better understand the interplay between public policy and these misperceptions, researchers at CHEPS have utilized restricted data to investigate the unintended effects of policies such as Tobacco-21 laws, flavored e-cigarette bans, and ENDS-specific taxes. By comparing states with differing policy approaches and timelines, the study reveals how regulation can influence public perceptions and subsequently alter consumer behavior.



The findings suggest that misinformation about e-cigarette risks may lead to spillover effects, ultimately reshaping public attitudes and behaviors in ways that could undermine the intended public health benefits of these regulations. These insights are especially relevant to ongoing policy debates, particularly those focused on curbing future outbreaks of misinformation surrounding e-cigarettes and improving the effectiveness of public health interventions.

The Vaping Pandemic in Italy

Vaping has emerged as a significant public health concern in Italy, mirroring broader global trends. While smoking rates have steadily declined due to effective public health measures, the growing popularity of e-cigarettes, particularly among younger populations, presents a new set of challenges. The European Commission has acknowledged this issue, prompting ongoing discussions about regulating vaping products to mitigate health risks and reduce youth uptake. Despite the increasing prevalence of vaping, its health implications remain the subject of debate, with concerns ranging from nicotine addiction to its potential role as a gateway to traditional smoking.

However, relatively few studies have examined the vaping landscape specifically in Italy. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating generational, gender, and educational differences in vaping behavior. Drawing on repeated cross-sectional data from ISTAT (the Italian National Institute of Statistics), the study constructs comparable cohorts to track behavioral trends over time. This analysis will provide valuable insights into how vaping has evolved across demographic groups and how socio-economic factors have influenced these patterns.

By applying the diffusion of innovations theory, **Diletta Migliaccio's** research aims to shed light on how e-cigarettes have spread within Italian society and what barriers may hinder their adoption. The study will also explore the factors that contribute to the differential uptake of vaping across various social groups, helping to inform future regulatory efforts. These insights are critical in understanding the nuanced impacts of vaping in Italy, particularly as policymakers seek to balance public health concerns with the need for effective regulation of emerging technologies.

Peer-Reviewed Article Highlights

Have Gun Buyback Programs Misfired?

(Forthcoming, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*)

Gun buyback programs (GBPs)—initiatives that allow individuals to exchange firearms for compensation—have long been promoted by city officials as a strategy to reduce gun violence. Often funded by local governments, nonprofits, or private donors, these programs typically offer $25 to $600 per firearm, sometimes providing higher payouts for handguns or assault-style weapons. Proponents argue that removing guns from circulation can lower crime rates. At the same time, critics, including the National Rifle Association, contend that GBPs are ineffective and fail to target the weapons or individuals most associated with gun violence.

A forthcoming publication by **Toshio Ferrazares**, **D. Mark Anderson**, and **Joseph J. Sabia** in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* offers the most comprehensive evaluation to date of the impact of GBPs in the United States. The study analyzes 687 programs implemented between 1991 and 2015 across 406 cities and 221 counties with populations over 50,000. Using data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) and the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS), the authors employ difference-in-differences and synthetic control methods to assess the programs' effects on gun-related crime and mortality.

The findings are consistent and conclusive: as implemented, GBPs did not produce statistically significant or economically meaningful reductions in gun crime or firearm-related deaths. The study finds no evidence that buybacks reduced homicides, suicides, or overall gun incidents—either in the short term or over multiple years. Even larger programs failed to show measurable effects. Several factors may explain the lack of impact. Participants tend to turn in low-risk, older, or inoperable firearms—those unlikely to be used in crimes. Compensation levels are often too low to attract individuals at higher risk of criminal activity. In some instances, funds obtained through the buyback may even be used to purchase newer or more effective weapons.

E-Cigarette Taxation and Marijuana Use

(Revise and Resubmit, *Journal of Health Economics*)

As e-cigarette use continues to pose public health challenges among youth, a growing body of research is beginning to explore how anti-vaping policies might influence other risky behaviors, particularly marijuana use. A new study by **Dhaval Dave**, **Yang Liang**, **Catherine Maclean**, **Caterina Muratori**, and **Joseph J. Sabia** offers the first national evidence on how electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS) taxes affect teen consumption of marijuana and other illicit substances.

The timing is critical. As of 2021, one in five U.S. adults and one in ten teens reported using marijuana. ENDS use has also surged, with 32.1 percent of high school seniors reporting past-year use in 2022. Notably, about one in ten high school students are dual users of marijuana and e-cigarettes—a pattern that has raised concerns among public health officials due to the heightened risks of early substance exposure and compounding health effects.

Using national survey data and a two-way fixed effects model, the researchers find that ENDS taxes have a clear impact on vaping behavior: a one-dollar increase in ENDS taxes leads to a 2.9 percentage-point reduction in past-month e-cigarette use among high school students. Importantly, the study also documents spillover effects. A similar tax increase results in a 1.3 to 1.4 percentage-point decline in past-month marijuana use—suggesting that marijuana and vaping are economic complements for youth.

The findings are particularly strong when taxes are high, implying that the size of the policy intervention matters. However, the study does not find evidence that ENDS taxes reduce the use of other illicit drugs, nor do they affect rates of youth admission into drug treatment programs during the period studied.

The researchers note that if gateway effects into harder drug use take more time to develop, longer-term analysis may be required to assess those outcomes. For now, their findings suggest that policies targeting youth vaping may offer broader public health benefits by also reducing marijuana use.

As more states weigh the optimal setting of e-cigarette taxes, this research highlights the potential for well-designed taxes to deliver cross-cutting benefits (and costs). The main public health cost appears to be inducing substitution toward combustible cigarettes. The main public health benefits now also include reducing teen marijuana use.

E-Cigarette Taxation and Alcohol Use

(Revise and Resubmit, *Journal of Law and Economics*)

While e-cigarette taxes are primarily designed to curb youth vaping, new research suggests they may also reduce an entirely different public health threat: alcohol-related traffic fatalities. A working paper by **Dhaval Dave**, **Yang Liang**, **Catherine Maclean**, **Joseph J. Sabia**, and **Matthew Braaksma** explores how taxes on vaping products affect teen binge drinking and deadly car crashes—two long-standing concerns in adolescent health.

Teen drinking remains widespread and dangerous. As of 2019, 20 percent of U.S. teens aged 16 to 18 reported drinking in the past month, and 10 percent admitted to drinking and driving. The social costs of underage drinking exceed $28 billion annually. Previous legislative efforts have focused directly on alcohol—via zero-tolerance driving laws, social host liability, and keg registration. But this study takes a novel approach: examining whether policies targeting nicotine vaping can reduce risky alcohol-related behaviors.

The researchers use data from five nationally representative surveys covering 2003–2019 and employ a difference-in-differences framework to estimate causal impacts. The findings are striking. A $1 increase in e-cigarette taxes is associated with a 1–2 percentage points drop in teen binge drinking, particularly among those aged 18 to 20. This supports the idea that vaping and drinking are economic complements—reducing access to one can curb use of the other.

The impact extends beyond self-reported behavior. Among alcohol-involved crashes with drivers aged 16 to 20, a $1 vape tax is linked to nearly an 8 percent reduction in driver fatalities. Broader effects are also evident: an 11 percent decline in all alcohol-related motor vehicle deaths and a 9 percent drop in teen-specific fatalities. The authors estimate that a $1 increase in vaping taxes would prevent two to three alcohol-related traffic deaths involving teen drivers per state, per year. Scaled nationally, that amounts to roughly 125 teen lives saved annually, valued at nearly $1.79 billion based on federal life valuation estimates. These findings point to a powerful and underappreciated benefit of ENDS taxation. While intended to combat youth nicotine use, vaping taxes may also serve as an effective indirect tool for reducing teen drinking and its most tragic consequences on the road.

Do E-Cigarette Flavor Bans Work?

(Accepted, Journal of Health Economics)

Flavored e-cigarettes have long been a flashpoint in the debate over youth tobacco use. Public health advocates argue that fruity or sweet flavors make nicotine vaping more appealing to teenagers, leading to lifelong addiction risks. In response, many jurisdictions have implemented bans on flavored electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS). But a new study co-authored by **Chad D. Cotti**, **Charles J. Courtemanche**, **Yang Liang**, **Catherine Maclean**, **Erik T. Nesson**, and **Joseph J. Sabia** reveals that while flavor bans may reduce e-cigarette use among young people, they may also carry unintended consequences—especially for young adults.

Since 2014, e-cigarettes have overtaken traditional tobacco as the most used nicotine product among teens in the United States. ENDS flavor bans are increasingly seen as a tool to curb that trend. This study is among the first to rigorously evaluate their real-world effects across different age groups. Drawing on multiple national datasets and using two-way fixed effects models, the authors estimate the impact of flavor restrictions on ENDS and combustible cigarette use.

Among teens, the bans appear to reduce heavier vaping. Flavor restrictions are associated with an immediate 2-percentage point decline in frequent and everyday youth ENDS use. These effects are strongest shortly after implementation and tend to diminish over time. For young adults aged 18 to 30, however, the pattern is different. Flavor bans reduce ENDS use by 2 to 5-percentage points, and unlike teens, these effects grow over time. But the study also finds a worrying trend: flavor bans are linked to increased use of combustible cigarettes among this group. For adults aged 31 and older—who are more likely to use e-cigarettes as a smoking cessation tool—flavor bans appear to have little effect.

The study raises important questions about the overall health impact of flavor bans. While these policies may reduce youth vaping, they may also push some users—especially young adults—toward more dangerous tobacco products like cigarettes. Given the well-established health risks of combustible tobacco, this substitution could undercut the intended public health benefits. As policymakers weigh the merits of ENDS flavor bans, this research highlights the need for a balanced approach—one that addresses youth addiction without inadvertently driving higher-risk behavior among older populations.

Recreational Marijuana and Racial Disparities in Arrests and Mortality

(Accepted, *Journal of Law and Economics*)

A recent study by **Zach Fone**, **Gokhan Kumpas**, and **Joseph Sabia** explores the impact of recreational marijuana laws (RMLs) on racial disparities in arrests and health outcomes in the United States. Drawing on data from the Uniform Crime Reports and National Vital Statistics System (2000 to 2019), the study reveals both progress and limitations in the aftermath of legalization.

The authors find that RMLs lead to large declines in marijuana related arrests for both Black and White adults. Arrest rates for Black adults drop by 498 to 561 per 100,000 people (a 92 to 104 percent reduction), while White adults see a decline of 128 to 145 per 100,000 (78 to 88 percent). These changes reflect the strong effects of legalization and support the social justice goals often cited by RML advocates.

However, legalization does not eliminate racial disparities in arrests. Because Black adults had higher arrest rates before legalization, the gap remains even as both groups see reductions. Furthermore, some marijuana related offenses, such as illegal sales or possession beyond legal limits, remain criminalized. The study also finds no evidence that RMLs reduce racial disparities in arrests for non-marijuana drug offenses, property crimes, or violent crimes. In areas with legal dispensaries, some disparities may even grow, possibly due to shifts in policing.

On the public health side, the effects are uneven. Among nonHispanic Whites, RMLs, especially in states allowing dispensary sales, are linked to declines in drug overdose and opioid related deaths But similar benefits do not extend to Black and Hispanic adults. In fact, disparities in overdose mortality may widen, and suicide rates among these groups rise slightly, likely reflecting preexisting trends.

The authors conclude that while RMLs reduce marijuana arrests and improve outcomes for some, they fall short of achieving racial equity. Broader reforms in health care, social services, and policing are needed to ensure legalization benefits all communities.

Sports Betting Legalization Causes Intimate Partner Violence

(Revise and Resubmit, *Review of Economics and Statistics*)

Since the Supreme Court cleared the way for legalized sports betting in 2018, millions of Americans have started placing bets on their favorite teams. The industry has grown rapidly, now bringing in over $10 billion each year. But while the excitement of betting adds to the thrill of game day, a new study by **Emily Arnesen** and **Kyutaro Matsuzawa** reveals a disturbing side effect: in states where sports gambling is legal, unexpected losses by local football teams are linked to an increase in violence within the home. The researchers focus on what happens when a team that is expected to win ends up losing, what they call an “upset loss.” Using crime data from police departments across the country between 2011 and 2022, the study shows that in states where sports betting is allowed, these upsetting losses lead to about a 9 percent increase in cases of domestic violence. The pattern is strongest in places where people can place bets from their phones, when games occur right after payday, and when the team has recently been on a winning streak.

This isn’t just about sports. The study highlights how financial stress and emotional disappointment, especially when combined, can fuel violent reactions. People who bet on their favorite team and lose money may lash out at those closest to them. The timing of these incidents is also telling: the increase in violence happens mainly during or just after the game, not in the following days, and it doesn’t spill over into unrelated crimes like bar fights.

While sports betting has created new entertainment options and brought in tax revenue for many states, this study shows that it may also come with serious social costs. Rather than calling for a ban, the authors suggest that states should use some of the gambling revenue to address these risks by funding domestic violence prevention programs, raising public awareness, and providing support to victims and families. In short, while betting may add to the fun of watching football, it’s important to be aware of the emotional and financial pressures it can create and to take steps to prevent harm when the game doesn’t go as expected.

Do E-Cigarette Retail Licensure Laws Reduce Youth Tobacco Use?

(Published, *Journal of Health Economics*)

As youth vaping surged over the last decade—reaching 27.5 percent of high school students in 2019—many states turned to new policies to limit teen access to e-cigarettes. Among these were e-cigarette licensure laws (ELLs), which require retailers to obtain a state license to sell e-cigarettes. The idea is that by regulating who can sell these products and strengthening enforcement, youth access will be reduced. Since 2011, 33 states and the District of Columbia have adopted ELLs, and public health leaders, including the U.S. Surgeon General, have encouraged their use.

A new study by **Charles Courtemanche, Yang Liang**, **J. Catherine Maclean**, **Caterina Muratori**, and **Joseph Sabia** offers the first nationwide look at whether e-cigarette licensure laws (ELLs) reduce teen vaping. Using Youth Risk Behavior Survey data, the researchers compared vaping trends before and after states adopted ELLs.

They found no meaningful reduction in teen vaping. In fact, use slightly increased by about 1.3 percentage points, though not significantly. Even in states with stricter laws, there was no decline in occasional, frequent, or daily use. A key reason for the authors' findings? Most teens don't buy vapes from retailers. Only about 20% report doing so; most rely on friends, family, or online sources. After ELLs passed, teens were slightly more likely to get e-cigarettes from others.

The study also found no real effect on cigarette smoking or overall tobacco use. The authors conclude that ELLs alone are unlikely to reduce youth vaping without targeting the informal supply chains where most teens access these products.

Minimum Wages and Teenage Childbearing in the United States

(Published, *Journal of Applied Econometrics*)

As support for raising the minimum wage has grown, some advocates have argued it could bring not only economic benefits but also public health improvements—such as reducing teen pregnancies. The idea is that higher wages might improve access to contraception or reduce the likelihood of risky behaviors. But new research by **Kyutaro Matsuzawa**, **Daniel I. Rees**, **Joseph J. Sabia**, and **Rebecca Margolit** finds little evidence to support that claim.

Teen births are linked to long-term challenges like lower education and higher poverty, keeping prevention a policy priority despite recent declines. This study examines whether raising the minimum wage reduces teen births, using U.S. data from 2003 to 2019. The authors find no significant impact of minimum wage increases on teen fertility across racial, ethnic, or marital lines and in some cases, slight increases among non-Hispanic White teens.

Exploring potential mechanisms, they find no evidence that higher wages reduce teen sexual activity or increase abortion use. In fact, contraceptive use among sexually active teens may slightly decline. The study also revisits earlier research that suggested wage hikes lower teen births. The authors find that prior findings were sensitive to the sample period under study, the regression model used, and accounting for heterogeneous and dynamic treatment effects over time.

In short, raising the minimum wage does not appear to reduce teen births. More targeted interventions will likely be needed to achieve this social outcome.

Union Membership and Native-Immigrant Labor Market Groups

(Revise and Resubmit, *The Economic Journal*)

Labor unions are often viewed as engines of worker equality, using collective bargaining to improve wages, job security, and working conditions. But in this paper, **Julia Zhu**, **Samuel Dodini**, and **Alexander Willén** present new evidence from Norway showing that union membership can actually widen labor market inequality—especially between native and immigrant workers.

Using detailed administrative data and field surveys from 2001 to 2015, the authors find that while union members generally receive a wage premium, the benefits are unevenly distributed. Native workers see an average earnings boost of around 10%, Western immigrants about 5%, and non-Western immigrants receive no short-term wage gain at all. These differences remain even among workers with similar roles in the same firm.

Union membership also provides stronger layoff protection for natives than for immigrants. The only area where unions appear to narrow the gap is sick leave usage: non-Western immigrants show the largest reduction, likely due to improved work conditions and greater vulnerability to exploitation.

The study finds these disparities are especially pronounced in concentrated labor markets, where employer power is high. While unions act as a counterweight to monopsony, they primarily benefit native workers, exacerbating inequality across groups. Survey evidence suggests the source of the disparity is union behavior, not differences in engagement. Non-Western immigrants are more likely to seek help from their unions but report lower satisfaction with the support they receive. Many perceive that natives, high-skilled workers, and those with stronger networks are prioritized.

Financial incentives may drive this dynamic: more than 90% of union dues come from native workers, who are more likely to be members and tend to earn more. This may lead unions to focus resources where they perceive the greatest financial return.

Overall, the unequal effects of union membership explain up to 27.5% of the wage gap between natives and non-Western immigrants within firms and occupations. These findings highlight how labor institutions, even those designed to promote fairness, can reinforce inequality in diverse labor markets.

A Feminist Economist's Perspective on Laws Regulating Marital Property and Fertility

(Forthcoming, *Bristol University Press*)

In this chapter, **Shoshana Grossbard** revisits longstanding questions in family economics through a feminist lens, focusing on how laws governing asset ownership within marriage influence women's decisions about when and how to have children.

Moving beyond traditional household-based models of fertility, Grossbard develops a framework that treats individuals, not couples, as the core decision-makers. Two case studies anchor the analysis. The first explores the abolition of coverture laws in 19th-century U.S. states, which had previously required women to surrender their property and earnings upon marriage. Grossbard and co-authors find that as women gained the legal right to retain personal assets after marriage, the likelihood of non-marital childbearing declined, especially in states with higher female labor force participation.

A second study, co-authored with Olivia Ekert-Jaffe, examines the introduction of community property laws in New Zealand and Ontario in the 1990s. These laws, which strengthened women's financial claims in the event of divorce, were associated with a decline in out-of-couple births. Together, the findings support the view that when legal reforms improve women's economic standing within marriage, they are more likely to form couples and have children within those partnerships. The chapter offers a compelling case for rethinking fertility behavior through the lens of individual agency, legal structure, and economic incentives.

Women, Economics & Household Economics: Relevance of Workshops Founded by Nobel Laureate Gary Becker, and of Jacob Mincer

(Published, *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*)

This study, written by **Shoshana Grossbard**, provides the first systematic, data-driven look at the gender composition of Ph.D. students who participated in the influential economics workshops founded by Nobel Laureate Gary Becker at Columbia and the University of Chicago. The authors document how these workshops, especially the Columbia Labor Workshop co-directed by Jacob Mincer,played a formative role in shaping the trajectory of household economics and in supporting women's advancement in the economics profession. Analyzing data on 1,274 economics Ph.D. recipients from Columbia, Chicago, NYU, and Northwestern between 1960 and 1980, the authors found that women were significantly more likely to earn a doctorate if they participated in a Becker-founded workshop.

At Columbia, women comprised 42% of all participants in the Labor Workshop, compared to just 15% of overall Ph.D. recipients. Among female Columbia Ph.D.'s, nearly one in three had participated in Becker or Mincer's workshop, four times the male rate. Workshop participation was also strongly associated with dissertations on marriage, fertility, and other household decisions, topics historically more likely to attract female economists. The authors suggest several reasons for this pattern: the focus on applied microeconomic topics relevant to gender and family life; the mixed-methods approach that emphasized both theory and empirical analysis; and a supportive peer environment, especially under Mincer's leadership in the 1970s. Their findings offer insight into how institutional settings and mentorship can help shape diversity in economic scholarships.

CHEPS-ECON 2024-2025 Seminar Series

Over the course of the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters, CHEPS and the Economics Department (ECON) hosted 26 scholars in the field of Economics. Seminar presentations included cutting-edge research pertaining to the fields of labor economics, economic demography, health economics, public economics, and developmental economics.

Speakers represented a wide range of prestigious research institutions, including the University of Georgia, University of California, San Diego, Cornell University, Brown University, University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, University of California, Davis, Tufts University, University of Texas at Austin, University of Southern California, Vanderbilt University, University of Texas at Dallas, University of Rochester, Stanford University, University of California, Los Angeles, Michigan State University, Harvard University, Carnegie Mellon University, Syracuse University, the University of Tennessee, and the University of Pittsburgh. To ensure accessibility for all attendees, each seminar offered a live Zoom feed, allowing for virtual participation by those unable to attend in person.

In addition to their presentations, speakers held individual meetings with CHEPS affiliates, providing valuable opportunities for one-on-one engagement. These sessions allowed affiliates to share their ongoing and prospective research, receive tailored feedback, and seek guidance on navigating their academic paths. During the fall semester, research assistants (RAs) discussed the relative strengths of various economics and public policy Ph.D. programs, gaining insight into how to stand out in an increasingly competitive applicant pool and identify programs aligned with their goals. By spring, many RAs had assumed greater responsibilities at the Center and were able to discuss their independent research projects. The 2023–2024 Seminar Series proved to be a meaningful and enriching experience for both faculty and students. Summaries of this year’s weekly seminars follow below.

The Colombian Drug War and the U.S. Opioid Epidemic

(Felipe Lozano-Rojas, University of Georgia)

Felipe Lozano-Rojas presented research on the link between international drug enforcement and domestic opioid markets. Using empirical data and natural experiments, he demonstrated how intensified anti-narcotic efforts in Colombia indirectly contributed to the rise of synthetic opioids like fentanyl in the U.S. His work illustrates that crackdowns on supply in one region can lead to dangerous substitutions in another, exacerbating public health crises. The study sheds light on the global nature of the opioid epidemic and emphasizes the need for coordinated international policy responses. This research contributes to the public health and policy literature by highlighting the unintended consequences of drug enforcement abroad.

Spatial Mobility, Econ Opportunity & Crime

(Gaurav Khanna, University of California, San Diego)

Gaurav Khanna examined how barriers to geographic mobility influence economic opportunity and crime. Using administrative data and an instrumental variables strategy, he showed that limiting people's ability to move for work reduces economic advancement and increases local crime rates. The research underscores the role of spatial mobility in enabling upward socioeconomic movement and suggests that policies that relax these constraints can improve both labor market outcomes and public safety. This work contributes to the literature on urban economics and crime by linking place-based constraints to individual behavior and societal outcomes.

Gender Diversity and Diversity of Ideas

(Michele Belot, Cornell University)

Michele Belot explored whether gender diversity translates into greater intellectual diversity in academic economics. Drawing from job market data and a controlled online experiment, the study found evidence of "idea homophily"—a preference for ideas that resemble one’s own. Women specializing in male-dominated fields received significantly better academic placements than their peers in female-dominated fields, and participants in the online study showed biases favoring content aligned with their interests or identity. The results suggest that while gender diversity initiatives may increase representation, they do not necessarily diversify the marketplace of ideas unless they explicitly address underlying preferences. This work offers a nuanced view on how identity and institutional incentives shape academic innovation.

Conviction, Incarceration, and Policy Effects in the Criminal Justice System

(Matthew Pecenco, Brown University)

Matthew Pecenco presented a novel empirical framework for estimating the separate effects of criminal conviction and incarceration by leveraging the random assignment of judges. His findings reveal that misdemeanor convictions increase future criminal behavior, especially among first-time offenders, whereas felony incarceration lowers crime only during the period of imprisonment. The analysis suggests that dismissing marginal misdemeanor charges can lead to substantial reductions in recidivism. This research advances the criminal justice literature by offering new tools to evaluate complex policy interventions and highlighting the potential for more humane and effective justice system reforms.

Assessing the Potential Labor Market Impacts of Artificial Intelligence

(Betsey Stevenson, University of Michigan)

Betsey Stevenson presented a timely analysis of how artificial intelligence (AI) is likely to shape the future of work and economic opportunity. She discussed the dual nature of AI as both a disruptive and transformative force—capable of displacing certain types of jobs while also creating new roles and boosting productivity. Her talk emphasized that the eventual impact of AI will depend on how society responds through policy and education. Drawing on recent empirical trends and theoretical insights, Dr. Stevenson argued for proactive investment in worker reskilling, updating social safety nets, and ensuring that the economic gains from AI adoption are broadly shared. This work contributes to the public economics and labor policy literature by situating technological change within a framework of inclusive growth.

Direct and Intergenerational Effects of Criminal History-Based Safety Nets

(Michael Mueller-Smith, University of Michigan)

Michael Mueller-Smith presented research on the effects of criminal history-based bans in public assistance programs. Using CJARS administrative data, he examined how TANF and SNAP restrictions for individuals with felony drug convictions impact families. A difference-in-differences approach revealed that these bans reduce benefit participation, increase economic hardship, housing instability, and recidivism. The harms extended to children, highlighting intergenerational consequences. This study adds to the literature on the broader impacts of criminal justice and welfare policies, emphasizing the need for policy reform to mitigate the negative long-term effects on families. The findings suggest that the collateral consequences of such restrictions often perpetuate cycles of poverty and criminal involvement, urging policymakers to consider more holistic approaches that support reintegration rather than further marginalization.

The Effects of the Acid Rain Program on Workplace Safety and Worker Productivity in Surface Coal Mines

(Ling Li, University of Wisconsin)

Ling Li examined the labor market effects of the 1990 Acid Rain Program, which targeted sulfur dioxide emissions. Using variation in coal sulfur content, the study found that high-sulfur coal mines saw sharp drops in production, employment, and productivity. Interestingly, workplace safety improved, especially non-fatal injuries—suggesting firms shifted focus from output to precaution under economic strain. The research sheds light on the broader labor impacts of environmental regulation.

The G.I. Bill, Standardized Testing, and Socioeconomic Origins of the US Educational Elite

(Santiago Pérez, University of California, Davis)

Santiago Pérez examined how standardized testing and federal programs like the G.I. Bill influenced the socioeconomic makeup of elite U.S. universities. Using historical admissions data, he found that while testing aimed to broaden access, it often reinforced inequality, especially alongside selective admissions. The G.I. Bill temporarily boosted diversity, but institutions soon returned to favoring wealthier students. His work informs current debates on meritocracy, affirmative action, and education policy.

Development Mismatch? Evidence from Agricultural Projects in Pastoral Africa

(Eoin McGuirk, Tufts University)

Eoin McGuirk presented research investigating the disconnect between centralized development planning and local needs in pastoral regions of Africa. His study used geospatial data on livestock grazing routes and the locations of agricultural projects to assess whether national investments aligned with the traditional mobility patterns of pastoralist communities. By combining this spatial analysis with household survey data and natural variation in aid allocation, Dr. McGuirk demonstrated that agricultural development projects often fail to account for local land use and economic systems, particularly in pastoral zones. The misalignment was shown to reduce the effectiveness of aid and potentially intensify conflict over land resources. This work contributes to the literature on development economics and political economy by highlighting the risks of top-down development planning in areas with distinct socio-economic systems.

Police Protections, Productivity, and Crime: Evidence from Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights

(Jamein Cunningham, University of Texas-Austin)

Jamein Cunningham's presentation examined the effects of Law Enforcement Officers' Bills of Rights (LEOBRs) on public safety and police behavior in the U.S. Using a novel dataset and event-study approach, the research assessed how these union-backed protections, designed to shield officers during disciplinary investigations, impact crime, clearance rates, and community outcomes. The findings show that LEOBRs are associated with lower crime and higher clearance rates, without significantly increasing racial disparities in arrests or police violence. These improvements appear to result from greater local investment in policing, such as increased employment and spending, rather than changes in officer conduct alone. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how police accountability laws intersect with public finance and criminal justice, and it challenges the assumption that stronger officer protections necessarily undermine accountability.

Can Financial Incentives Improve Research Representation?

(Mireille Jacobson, University of Southern California)

Mireille Jacobson presented a randomized trial on boosting inclusion in clinical research through financial incentives. Partnering with a county health system, her team tested three recruitment strategies for a brain health registry: a basic invitation, a $25 incentive, and a $2,500 lottery. The $25 offer increased enrollment by nearly 40%, while the lottery had no effect. However, targeted messaging proved most cost-effective. The study highlights how modest incentives and thoughtful outreach can support more equitable research participation.

Calls and Conduct: The Impact of Free Communication on Prison Misconduct

(Panka Bencsik, Vanderbilt University)

Panka Bencsik presented new research on how improving communication access in Iowa state prisons impacted in-prison behavior. The study examined the 2021–2022 rollout of free video calls and a reservation-based visitation system, finding that total infractions fell by up to 34% and violent incidents by as much as 62%. Using administrative data and a staggered difference-in-differences approach, the authors found no increase in communication misuse or drug-related misconduct. The results suggest that predictable, accessible contact with loved ones can enhance safety and rehabilitation without compromising security.

Supply-Side Opioid Restrictions and the Retail Pharmacy Market

(Anne Burton, University of Texas at Dallas)

Anne Burton presented new evidence on how public health regulations affect firm behavior, focusing on state "pill mill" laws aimed at reducing opioid overprescribing. Using rich establishment-level data and a difference-in-differences approach, her study found that these laws led to reductions in pharmacy sales and employment effects largely driven by increased closures among standalone, independent pharmacies. Yet, for pharmacies that remained in business, some experienced modest gains in market share. The talk shed light on the broader economic consequences of supply-side drug interventions, highlighting how policies designed to improve public health can reshape industry structure and contribute to consolidation.

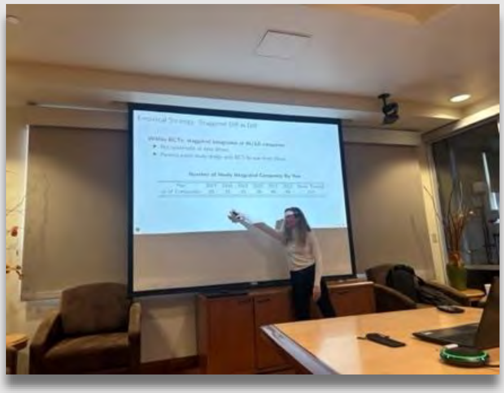
Bright Lines, Big Effects: Unintended Effects of Student Proficiency Thresholds

(David Figlio, University of Rochester and Stanford University)

David Figlio, in collaboration with Umut Özek, examined the broader implications of setting proficiency cut points in standardized testing, a common practice in educational systems for decisions like grade retention and remediation. Utilizing a unique situation in Florida where test scores were temporarily unavailable due to a testing glitch, they observed how the absence of this information affected student treatment and outcomes. Their analysis revealed that the mere presence of proficiency thresholds influences both students who marginally pass and those who just miss the cutpoint, affecting their educational trajectories in significant ways. This research highlights the profound impact that policy design decisions can have on student experiences and outcomes, emphasizing the need for careful consideration in the establishment of such thresholds.

Effects of Gender Integration on Men: Evidence from the U.S. Military

(Melanie Wasserman, University of California, Los Angeles)



Melanie Wasserman presented a compelling study on the often-overlooked consequences of gender integration policies. Specifically, how they affect men. Drawing on detailed data from the U.S. military and leveraging variation in gender composition across units, she examined how exposure to female colleagues influences male soldiers' careers and conduct. The analysis showed that gender integration had no negative impact on male performance or retention, and in some cases, improved peer dynamics. Her findings offer critical insights for ongoing debates around diversity in traditionally male-dominated fields, reinforcing the case for inclusion as a strategy that benefits organizational effectiveness.

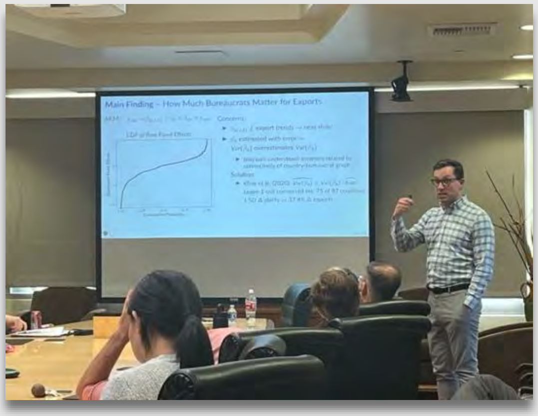
The Effects of Tobacco-21 Laws on Smoking and Vaping: Evidence from Panel Data and Biomarkers

(Chad Cotti, Michigan State University)

Chad Cotti explored the public health effects of raising the minimum legal age for tobacco sales to 21, known as Tobacco-21 laws. Using a combination of longitudinal survey data and objective biomarkers, his research measured changes in smoking and vaping behaviors among young adults. The findings revealed that Tobacco-21 laws led to measurable reductions in tobacco use, particularly among 18–20-year-olds, without significant substitution toward vaping. By combining behavioral data with biomarkers, the study strengthened causal claims and provided a clearer picture of how regulatory age thresholds can shape health outcomes. The work adds timely evidence to the policy debate around youth tobacco control.

Personnel is Policy: Bureaucrats and the Korean Export Miracle

(Philipp Barteska, Harvard University)



Philipp Barteska examined how the assignment of bureaucrats influenced the success of industrial policy during South Korea's rapid export-led growth. Leveraging newly digitized administrative records and detailed personnel data, his research studied the role of civil servants in implementing trade promotion policies across regions and industries. The findings showed that areas assigned more capable bureaucrats saw greater export growth, particularly in sectors targeted by national policy. These results underscore the importance of bureaucratic quality in driving economic development and demonstrate how individual civil servants can shape the trajectory of industrial transformation.

Do Workforce Development Programs Bridge the Skills Gap?

(Lisa Kahn, University of Rochester)

Lisa Kahn presented new evidence on whether public-private training grants help employers address skill shortages. Using linked administrative data on firms and job postings, her study showed that firms receiving training grants increased hiring, particularly for front-line roles, and began requiring fewer credentials in job ads. These effects persisted over time, suggesting that such programs not only support firm growth but also reduce hiring frictions in lower-skilled labor markets. The talk provided valuable insights into how workforce development policies can mitigate barriers to employment and improve job access.

Delivering Higher Pay? Impacts of Task-Level Pay Standard in Gig Economy

(Andrew Garin, Carnegie Mellon University)

Andrew Garin presented new evidence on the effects of wage regulation in app-based labor markets, focusing on Seattle's 2024 policy establishing a minimum per-task pay standard for delivery workers. Using novel, trip-level data from multiple gig platforms, the study compared workers in Seattle to those in other parts of Washington State. The policy raised average pay per task, despite a drop in tips, while reducing the total number of deliveries completed. Importantly, there was little evidence of workers exiting the sector or switching to rideshare work. Although total earnings remained roughly flat, the findings shed light on how task-level pay floors can reshape work intensity and compensation structure in the gig economy, offering valuable lessons for policymakers weighing interventions in flexible labor markets.

Acceptance of Same-Sex Couples and Their Location Choices

(Jooyoung Kim, Syracuse University)

Jooyoung Kim presented research on how social acceptance influences the residential decisions of same-sex couples in the United States. Using a conditional logit model and novel city-level measures of acceptance, the study showed that same-sex couples with college degrees are more likely to live in metropolitan areas with higher levels of acceptance toward LGBTQ+ individuals. Potential endogeneity between acceptance and location choices, the paper used the historical number of evangelical churches as an instrumental variable. The results revealed that acceptance plays a significant role in educational sorting among same-sex couples across cities. This work highlights the broader economic and demographic implications of social inclusivity, suggesting that cities with higher acceptance can attract educated talent and potentially boost local productivity.

Adverse Selection and Moral Hazard in Police Militarization and Citizens Deaths

(Matthew Harris, University of Tennessee)

Matt Harris presented research on the impact of military-grade equipment distributed to local police through the 1033 Program. Using county-level data and a strategy based on geographic access, the study finds that receiving gear like rifles, optics, and armored vehicles reduces citizen complaints and assaults on officers, with no increase in civilian deaths. Drug arrests rose, suggesting greater enforcement capacity, though clearance rates for violent crimes did not improve. While concerns about police militarization persist, the findings suggest more modest — and in some cases positive — effects than commonly assumed.

Women Leaders Improve Environmental Outcomes: Evidence from Crop Fires in India

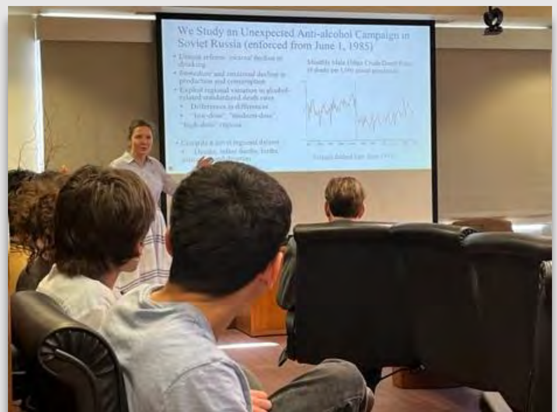
(Meera Mahadevan, University of California, San Diego)

Meera Mahadevan shared research that reveals a powerful but often overlooked connection: electing women to political office can improve air quality. Drawing on more than two decades of election and satellite data from India, her study finds that when a woman narrowly defeats a man in a local legislative race, crop fires, which are a major source of pollution, drop significantly. Air quality improves, especially in rural areas where crop burning is common during harvest seasons. What's behind the difference? To find out, the team surveyed hundreds of village leaders. They discovered that women were more likely to see crop fires as a serious threat to health, especially for children, and were more willing to support practical solutions like collecting crop residue or using it as animal feed instead of burning it. These actions, while simple, had measurable environmental impacts.

Alcohol in the Family: Health, Marriage, & Childbearing

(Olga Malkova, University of California, Irvine)

Olga Malkova presented research on the Soviet Union's 1985 anti-alcohol campaign, using regional variation in alcohol-related mortality to estimate its impact. The campaign led to lasting declines in adult and infant mortality, with child health gains linked to postnatal care improvements rather than prenatal exposure. It also affected family dynamics: fertility rose, abortions declined, and divorce rates increased, especially in urban areas. The study highlights how alcohol policy can shape not just health outcomes but broader demographic behavior.



Girls at School: Gender & Racial Differences in Mental Health

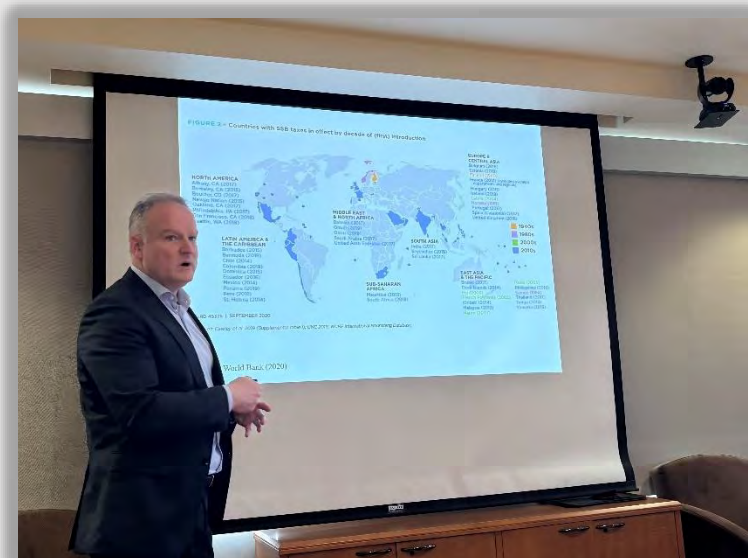
(Maria Zhu, Syracuse University)

Maria Zhu presented research on how the gender makeup of classmates affects adolescent mental health and school well-being. Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, the study uses variation in gender composition across cohorts within schools to estimate causal effects. The findings show that boys, particularly White boys, benefit from being in classrooms with a higher share of girls. A small increase in female peers improves boys' sense of belonging at school and reduces signs of poor mental health, with especially strong effects among those from lower-income or less-educated families. The study finds no significant changes in outcomes for girls. This research highlights how peer environments can shape mental health in adolescence and suggests that classroom gender balance may play a role in promoting positive school experiences, especially for vulnerable student populations.

The Impact of Fiscal Policies to Promote Healthy Diets on Maternal and Infant Health: Evidence from the Navajo Nation

(John Cawley, Cornell University)

One of the most comprehensive fiscal policies to improve health was adopted by the Navajo Nation, which has a high prevalence of food insecurity, obesity, and gestational diabetes. The Healthy Diné Nation Act (HDNA) of 2014-15 consists of two parts: 1) an exemption from sales tax for healthy foods and beverages; and 2) a tax increase on unhealthy foods and beverages. Together, they create a price wedge of 8% between unhealthy and healthy foods. This study estimates the impact of the HDNA on maternal and infant health outcomes.



The authors examine CDC birth certificate data for the U.S. for 2010-2018; i.e. for more than 3 years before and 3 years after the HDNA. They estimate difference-in-difference models and event studies that estimate the effect of the HDNA on a variety of outcomes concerning the health of mothers (e.g., pre-pregnancy weight, weight gain during pregnancy, gestational diabetes, and gestational hypertension) and newborns (e.g., birth weight, premature birth). The treatment group consists of mothers whose self-reported race is American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) and who live in the counties of the Navajo Nation. The comparison group consists of mothers whose self-reported race is also AIAN but who live outside the three states that include the Navajo Nation (AZ, NM, UT).

The authors hypothesize that the HDNA, given that it was designed to promote healthy diets, improved health outcomes for mothers and newborns. However, they find no beneficial impacts of the HDNA on these outcomes. The comprehensive nature of the HDNA, as well as the prevalence of diet-related chronic disease and maternal and infant health conditions among the Navajo Nation population, make this an important contribution to the evidence base.

THE CENTER FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS & POLICY STUDIES

FALL 2024 CHEPS-ECON SEMINAR SERIES

Co-Sponsored by the Department of Economics

Thursdays @ 3:30PM-4:45PM
Finch Conference Room (AL 660)

August 29
Felipe Lozano-Rojas
Health Economics
University of Georgia

September 5
Gaurav Khanna
Labor Economics
University of California San Diego

September 19
Michèle Belot
Labor Economics
Cornell University

September 26
Matthew Pecenco
Economics of Crime
Brown University

October 3
Betsey Stevenson
Labor Economics
University of Michigan

October 10
Michael Mueller-Smith
Economics of Crime
University of Michigan

October 17
Ling Li
Labor Economics
University of Wisconsin Parkside

October 24
Santiago Peréz
Labor Economics
University of California Davis

October 31
Eoin McGuirk
Development Economics
Tufts University

November 7
Jamein Cunningham
Labor Economics
University of Texas Austin

November 14
Mireille Jacobson
Health Economics
University of Southern California

December 5
Panka Bencsik
Health Economics & Crime
Vanderbilt University

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THE CENTER FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS & POLICY STUDIES

SPRING 2025 CHEPS-ECON SEMINAR SERIES

Co-Sponsored by the Department of Economics

Thursdays @ 3:30PM-4:45PM
Finch Conference Room (AL 660)

January 23
Anne Burton
Health Economics
University of Texas Dallas

January 30
David Figlio
Economics of Education
University of Rochester & Stanford University

February 6
Melanie Wasserman
Labor Economics
University of California Los Angeles

February 13
Chad Cotti
Health Economics
Michigan State University

February 27
Philipp Barteska
Development Economics
Harvard University

March 6
Lisa Kahn
Labor Economics
University of Rochester

March 13
Andrew Garin
Labor Economics
Carnegie Mellon University

March 20
Kalena Cortes
Labor Economics
Texas A&M University

April 10
Matthew Harris
Labor and Health Economics
University of Tennessee

April 17
Meera Mahadevan
Environmental Economics
University of California San Diego

April 24
Osea Giuntella
Labor and Health Economics
University of Pittsburgh

May 1
Maria Zhu
Labor Economics
Syracuse University

May 8
Cody Tuttle
Economics of Crime
University of Texas Austin

May 15
John Cawley
Health Economics
Cornell University

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SDSU Student Affairs and Campus Diversity Student Success Fee

The Spring 2025 Seminar Series is supported, in part, by the College of Arts & Letters, SDSU Student Success Fee and external funding from CHEPS.

Interviews with Departing M.S. Students

Christian Pryfogle, how did you become involved as a researcher with the Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies?

After being accepted to SDSU for the MS, I was invited to a private seminar and week-long coding bootcamp (thanks, Kyu!). Here I was introduced to using Stata for applied economics research, and I haven't stopped using it since.

What are the most important skills you acquired?
I've learned a lot about the skills necessary to create and manage a research project, which carried nicely into the master's courses that required me to author two separate research papers. I will continue to use this quantitative and qualitative toolkit I've built at the center in my current and future research.

What advice do you have for future CHEPS graduate affiliates?
(1) There are plenty of lessons to learn from your mistakes, but it's likely that others have already made them, so be very open to advice! (2) Stay on top of your work and do not make any decisions without weighing the long-term costs. A lot of things on your weekly to-do list, whether academic, social, or income related, can get shifted around depending on your priorities… but just know you only get one chance to get good grades! (3) Prioritize good code that works over cool code that is prone to break. Research projects take a long time to work through, so it's best not to waste time on fixing bugs! (4) If you would like to pursue a PhD, really be sure your preferences are complete, and you have a schedule/checklist completed way in advance of the applications opening… before you know it, the deadlines are just a week away!

Which Ph.D. program will you be attending, and why did you choose it?
I will be attending the University of Oregon for a Ph.D. in Economics. UO has a wide array of economics fields offered to study in the department, like development, trade, macroeconomics, and experimental economics. There are faculty there with connections to CHEPS, and joint research between the campuses can still be conducted seamlessly. Finally, revealed at my visit day, there are plenty of resources offered to graduate students that have successfully aided them in their job market searches.

Tony Chuo, what motivated you to become involved as a researcher with the Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies?

I moved to San Diego two years ago from Texas because of the research responsibilities that CHEPS offers to its pre-doctoral affiliates. The masters-level coursework has been great too, but I don't think I would have had the chance to co-author on an academic paper at other institutions, for example. That's allowed me to better understand a research career and given me a leg up, as compared to other students entering Ph.D. programs.

What are the most important skills you acquired?
I've learned so many things during my time here at CHEPS, but learning the discipline it takes to bring a research paper in economics to publication has been the most valuable. It's not easy or short-lived, and there can be many "false peaks" during the process, so I've learned it just takes a continued effort day-by-day to move these big projects along. Relatedly, I've learned the importance of attention to detail, how much it pays off to get things correct from the get-go, and how difficult it can be to fix mistakes when they do happen.

What advice do you have for future CHEPS graduate affiliates?
You get in what you put out. CHEPS affiliates should ask themselves whether they're truly interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in economics. If so, go all in. This program can give you an extremely rare opportunity to participate in the world of economic research; all that's required is to follow the guidance from our mentors at CHEPS. No question it's a difficult workload but remember that your experience here is very hard to find across the country.

Which Ph.D. program will you be attending, and why did you choose it?
I'll be starting a Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Texas at Austin this Fall. UT was one of my top choices during the application process, so I'm super excited. I was drawn to strengths across subfields: health and other applied microeconomics topics, along with faculty working in industrial organization and macroeconomics. I'm looking forward to coursework in topics I haven't formally studied yet, as well as the chance to work with other researchers and grow my academic network.

CHEPS Faculty Research Affiliates

Audrey Beck
San Diego State University

Audrey Beck is an Associate Professor of Sociology at San Diego State University. She received her B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles, and her Ph.D. in sociology with specializations in demography and stratification from Duke University. Following graduation, she was a postdoctoral fellow in the Office of Population Research and the Center for Research on Child Wellbeing at Princeton University. While there, her primary focus was the impact of union formation and dissolution on child health, parenting, and child school readiness. She first came to San Diego State University as a postdoctoral research associate before joining the Sociology Department as an Assistant Professor in 2015. Her work uses a variety of demographic methods to understand race, ethnic, and nativity disparities in health. Dr. Beck has received a number of grants and fellowships and has published her research in *Demography, Social Science and Medicine, Journal of Gerontology, Social Science Quarterly, American Journal of Public Health, Sociology of Education,* and the *Journal of Marriage and Family*, among others.

Hao Fe
San Diego State University

Hao Fe is an Assistant Professor at San Diego State University. She joined the Department of Economics in 2018 after receiving her Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Rochester. Her research combines econometric models with emerging big data sources to develop novel causal inference approaches. Her areas of interest include peer effects, crime, and health economics. She has published in the *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, *Journal of Urban Economics,* and *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*. During her time at SDSU, she has been honored with the critical thinking grant from the College of Arts and Letters three times and the Assigned Time grant for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities from San Diego State University twice.

Kyutaro Matsuzawa
San Diego State University

Kyutaro (Kyu) Matsuzawa is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Oregon and has joined the Department of Economics at San Diego State University as an Assistant Professor as of August 2025. He is also the CHEPS Chief of Staff and serves as the inaugural Constable of the Center's Economics of Crime division. Kyu is an applied microeconomist with an emphasis on health economics, labor economics, and the economics of crime. His current work explores topics such as the efficiency of pretextual stops, the effect of sports gambling legalization on domestic violence, the relationship between drug decriminalization and drug overdoses, and how sporting events can contribute to drunk driving and violence. His projects are at various stages, including a revise and resubmit at the *Review of Economics & Statistics*, a reject and resubmit at the *Journal of Public Economics*, and several others he plans to submit this summer. His work has appeared in such outlets as the *Journal of Law and Economics*, the *Journal of Human Resources*, and *Economic Inquiry*. During his time at the University of Oregon, he received multiple grants, including from the Russell Sage Foundation. He is very excited to return to SDSU, pursue future collaborations with faculty in the Department, and continue his involvement with CHEPS.

Yang Liang
San Diego State University

Yang Liang is an Assistant Professor of Economics and Assistant Director of the Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies (CHEPS) at San Diego State University. Liang is an applied economist specializing in labor, health, and international economics. His research focuses on how firms and workers respond to globalization and market integration. His work has been published in peer-reviewed journals including *Journal of Health Economics*, *JAMA: Pediatrics*, *The World Economy*, and *China Economic Review*, as well as book chapters and policy briefs with the Upjohn Institute and Peter Institute for International Economics. Liang received his Ph.D. in Economics from Syracuse University.

Brandy Lipton
University of California, Irvine

Brandy Lipton is an applied microeconomist specializing in health economics and public policy. Her core interests lie in exploring the connections between health care policies and both health and economic outcomes. The majority of her work leverages state-level variation in Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program policies. For example, recent research has explored the effects of optional benefits in Medicaid on adult health and labor market outcomes. Ongoing work is examining whether adult Medicaid benefits affect outcomes among children of adult enrollees.

After completing her graduate studies in economics at Northwestern University, Dr. Lipton spent several years working for health agencies within the federal government. Her work involved analysis of nationally representative household surveys fielded by these agencies to address a variety of health and public policy topics. This work was published in leading peer-reviewed economics and policy journals, including the *Journal of Health Economics*, the *Journal of Human Resources*, and *Health Affairs*.

Dr. Lipton is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Health, Society, and Behavior at the University of California, Irvine. She is an active participant in the Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies (CHEPS) seminar series and sits on the advisory board for the Center.

Thiago de Lucena
San Diego State University

Thiago de Lucena is an Assistant Professor of Economics and a Faculty Research Fellow at San Diego State University. Before joining SDSU, he received a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of California, Davis. He is an applied microeconomist with research interests spanning Development Economics, Labor Economics, and Political Economy. He recently received acceptance on his job market paper at the *Journal of Human Resources*.

Jacob Penglase

San Diego State University

Jacob Penglase is an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics at San Diego State University and is a CHEPS Faculty Research Fellow. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from Boston College. Prior to joining SDSU, he was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bordeaux and an associate economist at Analysis Group. His research focuses on measuring poverty and individual well-being. His past work has examined consumption inequality among children in the context of child fostering in Malawi. More recent research studied the relationship between poverty and household size in Bangladesh. His work has appeared in the *Economic Journal, Journal of Public Economics*, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, and *Economic Development and Cultural Change*.

Julia Zhu

San Diego State University

Julia Zhu is an Assistant Professor of Economics and CHEPS Faculty Research Fellow at San Diego State University. She is an applied microeconomist. Her research interests are in labor economics, economics of migration, and economics of education. She has several lines of active research that investigate the causes and effects of high-skilled immigration, labor market institutions and inequality, local impacts of immigration enforcement policies, climate change and migration, and attitude formation towards immigrants and racial minorities. She received her Ph.D. from Cornell University in 2022. Prior to joining SDSU, she was a postdoctoral fellow in labor economics at the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH). Currently, her job market paper is at the revise-and-resubmit stage at the *Economic Journal*. She has also published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Gokhan Kumpas

California State University, Los Angeles

Gokhan Kumpas is an Assistant Professor of Economics at California State University, Los Angeles, since Fall 2022. He completed his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of New Hampshire in 2021, specializing in health economics and policy analysis. His dissertation explored the spillover effects of anti-discrimination and anti-violence policies. Dr. Kumpas's research interests span applied microeconomics, with a particular focus on health, risky behaviors, crime, and education. His most recent scholarly contributions include a research paper on the impact of recreational marijuana laws (RMLs) on racial disparities on crime and mortality with Dr. Sabia, recently accepted at the *Journal of Law and Economics*. Additionally, his recent work investigates the effects of athletic participation on welfare program participation, and the influence of anti-bullying laws on organ donations. His publications have appeared in top journals such as the *Journal of Human Resources* and the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management.* In addition to his research, Dr. Kumpas actively contributes to his department and the broader community. His efforts were particularly recognized during his second-year review, which was extremely positive, reflecting his significant contributions and advancing his progress towards tenure.

Zach Fone

United States Air Force Academy

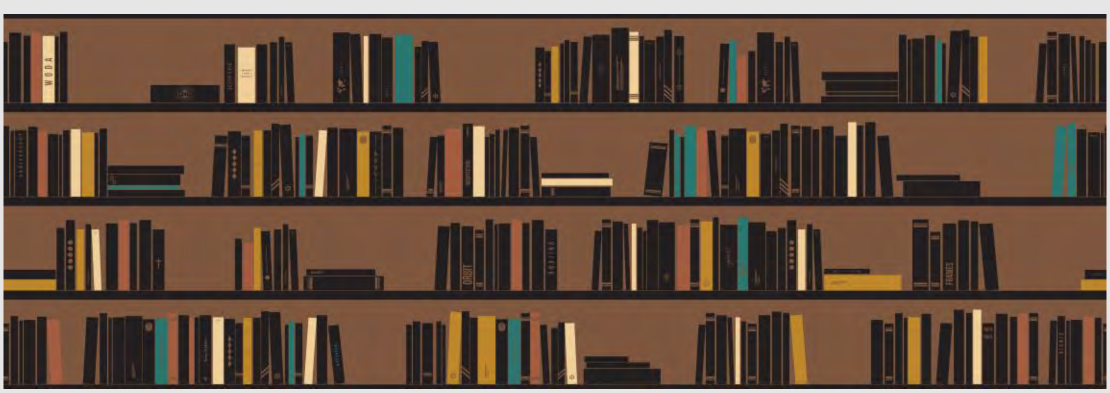
Zach Fone is an Assistant Professor and Analyst for the Office of Labor and Economic Analysis (OLEA) at the United States Air Force Academy. He is helping to build OLEA's profile as a trusted and respected source of military manpower analysis and labor economics research more broadly. His research interests span the economics of crime and punishment, sports economics, labor economics, and health economics. His work has been published in the *Journal of Public Economics*, the *Journal of Law and Economics*, and the *Journal of Sports Economics*. Zach received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of New Hampshire and has been a CHEPS Research Affiliate since 2017.

Alex Chesney
U.S. Air Force Academy

Alex Chesney will be joining the United States Air Force Academy this fall as an Assistant Professor of Economics and Analyst for the Office of Labor Economics and Analysis (OLEA). He completed his Ph.D. in Economics at the University of California, Davis in 2022. Alex earned his M.A. in Economics from San Diego State University in 2012 and his bachelor's degree from the United States Air Force Academy in 2011. His research interests lie in Public and Labor Economics, with a particular focus on education and policies affecting military personnel and their dependents. Alex’s recent research has appeared in leading journals, including the Journal of Public Economics, Economics of Education Review, and Military Operations Research Journal. This summer, Alex will serve as a Senior Economist at the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA).

Jeffrey Clemens
University of California, San Diego

Jeffrey Clemens is an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of California, San Diego. He is also a Faculty Research Fellow of the National Bureau of Economic Research and an affiliate of the Economic Self-Sufficiency Policy Research Institute at the University of California, Irvine. He is currently an associate editor at the Journal of Health Economics and American Economic Journal: Economic Policy. He has previously held visiting positions at Stanford University and the University of Texas at Austin. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2011 and his B.A. from Harvard College in 2005.



Cal Bryan

M.A., Economics, San Diego State University
Ph.D., Economics, Colorado State University

Cal Bryan is an Assistant Professor of Economics at Washington & Lee University (starting Fall 2025). He received a B.S. in Bioenvironmental Sciences from Texas A&M University in 2013, an M.A. in Economics from San Diego State University in 2020, and a Ph.D. in Agricultural and Natural Resource Economics from Colorado State University in 2024. His dissertation focused on using economic tools to evaluate the efficiency and equity of wildfire suppression strategies. His current research focuses on evaluating the efficiency of the Federal Crop Insurance Program, developing strategies to reduce wildfire risk before it occurs, and estimating the economic spillovers of wildfire suppression efforts. His broader research agenda examines how individuals and institutions respond to environmental and climate risks, with a focus on natural disaster management, forest resource protection, and the use of microeconomic and geospatial tools to evaluate the sustainability, effectiveness, and equity of environmental policies.

Toshio Ferrazares

M.A., Economics, San Diego State University
Ph.D., Economics, University of California, Santa Barbara

Toshio Ferrazares is an Assistant Professor of Economics at CUNY Hunter College as of Fall 2025. He received his M.A. and B.A. in Economics from San Diego State University (SDSU). He received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is interested in researching macroeconomics, labor, and public finance. His work has been published in the *Journal of Urban Economics* and the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.

CHEPS Postdoc Affiliates

Tessie Krishna
Ph.D., Rutgers University

Tejaswi (Tessie Krishna) Pukkalla is a postdoctoral research scholar at San Diego State University's Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies, specializing in the economics of crime, public policy, and applied microeconomics, with a focus on juvenile justice reform and the economics of tobacco control. She earned her Ph.D. in Economics from Rutgers University in 2024 and holds additional degrees from Rutgers, UT Austin, the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, and Jawaharlal Nehru Technological Institute. Her research, recognized with awards like the Sidney I. Simon Award and the Dorothy Rinaldi Award, has been presented at major conferences and examines the effects of reforms like Florida's Civil Citation Program, which reduces recidivism and school-based referrals, and New York City's Close to Home initiative, which, despite aiming for decarceration, led to higher recidivism rates due to more lenient judicial placements. Beyond research, Tessie has contributed to public service and teaching at institutions like Princeton and Rutgers, and her work highlights the importance of rigorous policy design for improving societal outcomes.

Eduardo Ignacio Polo-Muro
Ph.D., University of the Basque Country

Eduardo Ignacio Polo-Muro is a lecturer in the Department of Economics at San Diego State University and a Research Affiliate at the Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies (CHEPS). He holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of the Basque Country (2021), where he also completed a postdoctoral fellowship. Eduardo has held research positions at the University Pablo de Olavide and was a Postdoctoral Visiting Scholar at the University of California, San Diego (2022-2024). He is a member of the BIRTE research group. His research focuses on the interplay between public policy and labor markets, with particular attention to health, immigration, and household consumption.

Jooyoung Kim
Ph.D., Economics, Syracuse University

Jooyoung Kim is an applied economist whose research interests span labor, health, and urban economics. His dissertation focused on the location decisions of same-sex couples, both within and across U.S. cities. Jooyoung received his Ph.D. in Economics from Syracuse University in 2024, where he was a Graduate Research Associate at the Maxwell School's Center for Policy Research. Prior to joining CHEPS as a postdoctoral affiliate, he was a Visiting Assistant Professor at St. Lawrence University.

Nikolaus Prodromidis
M.A., Development Economics, University of Gottingen
Ph.D., Economics, University of Duisburg-Essen

Nikolaos Prodromidis is a Postdoctoral Fellow at CHEPS, specializing in applied microeconomics with a focus on labor and health economics. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Duisburg-Essen. Nikolaos's research investigates how labor market policies shape health outcomes, particularly mortality. One of his main research initiatives uses historical data from Sweden to show that reducing working hours led to substantial and lasting declines in mortality. At CHEPS, he is studying the health effects of minimum wage policies, as well as the effectiveness of school-based e-cigarette bans in curbing youth nicotine vaping. Other ongoing work explores the public health consequences of labor strikes during pandemics and the long-term benefits of hospital births. His research blends big data and quasi-experimental methods to generate policy-relevant insights in labor and health economics.

Anwar Assamidanov
Ph.D., Economics, Claremont Graduate University
Postdoctoral Scholar, UC Irvine

Anwar Assamidanov is a Postdoctoral Scholar in Health Economics at the University of California, Irvine's Joe C. Wen School of Population and Public Health. His research focuses on Medicaid policy, health disparities, and maternal and child health outcomes, with additional interests in behavioral health and telehealth policy. He applies quasi-experimental methods and population health data to evaluate how healthcare access influences outcomes in vulnerable populations. Anwar holds a Ph.D. in Economics, and his work seeks to inform public health policies that promote equity and improve health systems' reach and effectiveness.

Xuechao Qian
Ph.D., Economics, The Ohio State University
Postdoctoral Scholar, UC Irvine

Xuechao (Jane) Qian is a Postdoctoral Scholar in the Department of Health, Society, and Behavior at the UC Irvine Joe C. Wen School of Population & Public Health. She was previously a Lazear-Liang Postdoctoral Scholar at the Stanford Graduate School of Business from 2022 to 2024 and earned her Ph.D. in Economics from The Ohio State University in 2022. Beginning in August 2025, she will join the Miller College of Business at Ball State University as an Assistant Professor of Economics. Her research lies at the intersection of labor economics and health economics, with applications to public economics, innovation, and economic history. She uses quasi-experimental designs and large historical and contemporary datasets to conduct research in two broad areas: (1) the training and supply of healthcare professionals, access to care, and population health outcomes; and (2) institutions governing higher education and human capital formation, and their subsequent effects on science, innovation, and human capital acquisition. Her work places particular emphasis on issues of underrepresentation, diversity, gender, and child well-being. Her research has been published in outlets such as *AER: Papers and Proceedings* and the *Journal of Population Economics*.

Brittany E. Bass
University of California-Los Angeles

Brittany Bass received her Ph.D. in Economics from the University of California, Irvine, in 2019. She is currently an Economist for the Integrated Substance Abuse Programs in the Semel Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. Prior to joining UCLA, she was an Assistant Professor of Economics at Sacramento State University. Brittany is a health economist who primarily works on the impact of policies related to substance use disorder treatment on youth and adult health and economic outcomes. Her past research has focused on examining the impact of sex education mandates, maternity leave laws, minimum wages, and technology funding. Brittany's research has appeared in peer-reviewed economics and policy journals including *Economics of Education Review, Contemporary Economic Policy, IZA Journal of Labor Policy,* and *Journal of Population Economics*.

Non-Academic Research Fellows

Travis Freidman
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Travis Freidman is an economist at the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, specializing in economic data analysis and macroeconomic modeling. He contributes to the development of key economic indicators that inform government decision-making and public policy.

Drew McNichols

Amazon

Drew McNichols received his Ph.D. at the University of Oregon. He is currently an economist working at Amazon, specializing in labor economics and public economics. His most recent work studies the impact of policies related to gender pay inequality. In other work, he studies topics such as youth criminality and the impacts of marijuana legalization. Drew was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of California San Diego, and the Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies (CHEPS) at San Diego State University.

Thanh Tam Nguyen

M.A., Economics, San Diego State University
Ph.D., Economics, University of New Hampshire

Tam Nguyen received her Ph.D. in Economics at the University of New Hampshire in September 2023. Her research examines the effects of government policies on labor market outcomes, health outcomes, risky behaviors, and crime. She has published her work in the *Journal of Law and Economics, Health Economics, Economics and Human Biology, and Southern Economic Journal*.

Caterina Muratori

University of Barcelona

Caterina Muratori is a Postdoctoral Affiliate at the University of Barcelona. Prior to that appointment, she was a Postdoctoral Affiliate in Economics at the Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies (CHEPS) at San Diego State University. She received her MS from the University of Bologna in 2018 and her Ph.D. from the University of Torino and the University of Reading in 2022. She is an applied microeconomist with research interests in the areas of health economics, gender economics, and economic demography. A thread that connects many of the various topics on which she is working is a focus on gender, race, and sexual disparities in health and labor market outcomes.

M.S. Predoc Student Affiliates

Christian Pryfogle
M.S. Candidate, Economics, San Diego State University

Christian Pryfogle earned his B.A. in Economics with a specialization in Quantitative Analysis and a minor in Statistics from San Diego State University in 2022. After briefly working in insurance, he returned to SDSU to pursue an M.S. in Economics and joined CHEPS as a pre-doctoral research assistant. There, he developed skills in research design and applied econometrics, contributing to projects like Flavored E-Cigarettes and Teen Vaping. Christian will begin his Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Oregon in Fall 2025. He enjoys solving math and coding puzzles in his spare time.

Tony Chuo
M.S. Candidate, Economics, San Diego State University

Tony Chuo received his undergraduate degree in Economics from Texas A&M University. He is soon to graduate with his M.A. in Economics from San Diego State University. He will continue at The University of Texas at Austin to begin an Economics Ph.D. in Fall 2025. At CHEPS, Tony has developed his empirical research skills through various projects with The Center, including work on disparities in response to e-cigarette taxation among queer youth, the impacts of e-cigarette taxation on youth and adult body weight, and other ongoing work regarding tobacco control policy effectiveness. He has enjoyed his time at CHEPS and would like to continue in the field of health economics. In his free time, Tony enjoys cooking, photography, music, and going on runs (but his knees do not).

Joaquin Arellanes
M.S. Candidate, Economics, San Diego State University

Joaquin Arellanes earned his undergraduate degree in Business Economics from the University of California, Riverside, and is currently finishing his first year of the M.S. program at San Diego State University. At CHEPS, he has gained early experience assisting with data cleaning and supporting preliminary stages of research. Joaquin is interested in applied economics and enjoys learning about the research process. In his free time, he enjoys movies and reading.

Yuhao He
M.S. Candidate, Economics, San Diego State University

Yuhao He is currently an M.S. student in Economics, focusing on applied economics and data-driven analysis. It was his involvement in the CHEPS seminar series that sparked his interest in research. The seminars not only broadened his perspective but also motivated him to pursue a Ph.D. Yuhao's current research investigates the intersections of political institutions, governance, and resource wealth, with a particular focus on the mechanisms that influence public policy and societal outcomes. Outside of his academic work, Yuhao has a background as a resident DJ for an underground music club, and you may catch him spinning at a local party on weekend nights.

Elijah Welton
M.S. Candidate, Economics, San Diego State University

Elijah Welton received his B.A. in Economics and History (with minors in Statistics and Public Policy Analytics) from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. While there, he worked as a research assistant for Oak Ridge National Lab, the city government, the county government, and the Baker School for Public Policy. His research interests include the economics of higher education, labor economics, and New Deal public policy. He is enrolling at SDSU in the fall to pursue an M.S. in economics and joining CHEPS as a predoctoral research fellow.

Doctoral Student Affiliates

Isaac Baumann
M.A., Economics, San Diego State University
Ph.D. Candidate, Economics, University of Illinois-Chicago

Isaac Bauman is finishing up his first year in the economics Ph.D. program at the University of Illinois-Chicago. He hopes to explore research interests in a variety of applied economics fields, including education, crime, and public economics. Isaac received an M.A. in Economics from San Diego State University in 2021 and was a CHEPS student research assistant from 2019-2020.

Russell Leonard
M.A., Economics, San Diego State University
Ph.D. Candidate, Economics, UC Irvine

Russ is a Ph.D. candidate in economics at the University of California, Irvine. He is broadly interested in public/urban/labor topics, particularly those involving the internet and its infrastructure. His current work explores user responses to abusive online peers and their measurement, as well as quality competition between legacy and fiber-optic broadband internet providers. He has also co-authored papers on public health insurance and youth risky behaviors. Russ holds a B.A. in economics and philosophy from the University of Colorado-Boulder and an M.A. in economics from San Diego State University. Outside of work, he enjoys hiking, fishing, and cooking.

Rebecca Margolit
M.A., Economics, San Diego State University
Ph.D. Candidate, Economics, Cornell University

Rebecca is a first-year Ph.D. student in Economics at Cornell University. She is interested in labor, health, and applied Econometrics. Prior to starting her Ph.D., she was a predoctoral research assistant at the University of Notre Dame and completed her master's degree at SDSU while also working as a CHEPS research assistant.

Alicia Marquez
M.A., Economics, San Diego State University
Ph.D. Candidate, Public Policy, Cornell University

Alicia Marquez received her B.S. degree in Environmental Science with a minor in Economics and an M.A. degree in Economics from San Diego State University. She is currently attending the Policy Analysis and Management Ph.D. program at Cornell University. She chose this program because of its interdisciplinary nature, with strong faculty in fields ranging from health economics to demography to environmental economics. Her specific interests include natural resource economics, health economics, and public policy.

Cameron Milani
M.A., Economics, San Diego State University
Ph.D. Candidate, Economics, Claremont Graduate University

Cameron Milani received his B.A. in economics from the University of California, Los Angeles, and his M.A. in economics from SDSU. He is currently attending the Ph.D. in Economics program at Claremont Graduate University. His interests include labor economics, economic development, and housing markets.

Samuel Safford
MA, Economics, San Diego State University
PhD Candidate, Sociology, Cornell University

Samuel Safford received his B.A. in Applied Economics from California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State LA), his Master of Arts in Economics at SDSU, then his M.A. in Sociology at Michigan State University. He is currently attending Cornell University's Ph.D. program in Sociology. His interests include gender and sexuality, methodology, culture and knowledge, and social policy.

Cooper Smiley
M.A., Economics, San Diego State University
Ph.D. Candidate, Public Administration and Policy, University of Georgia

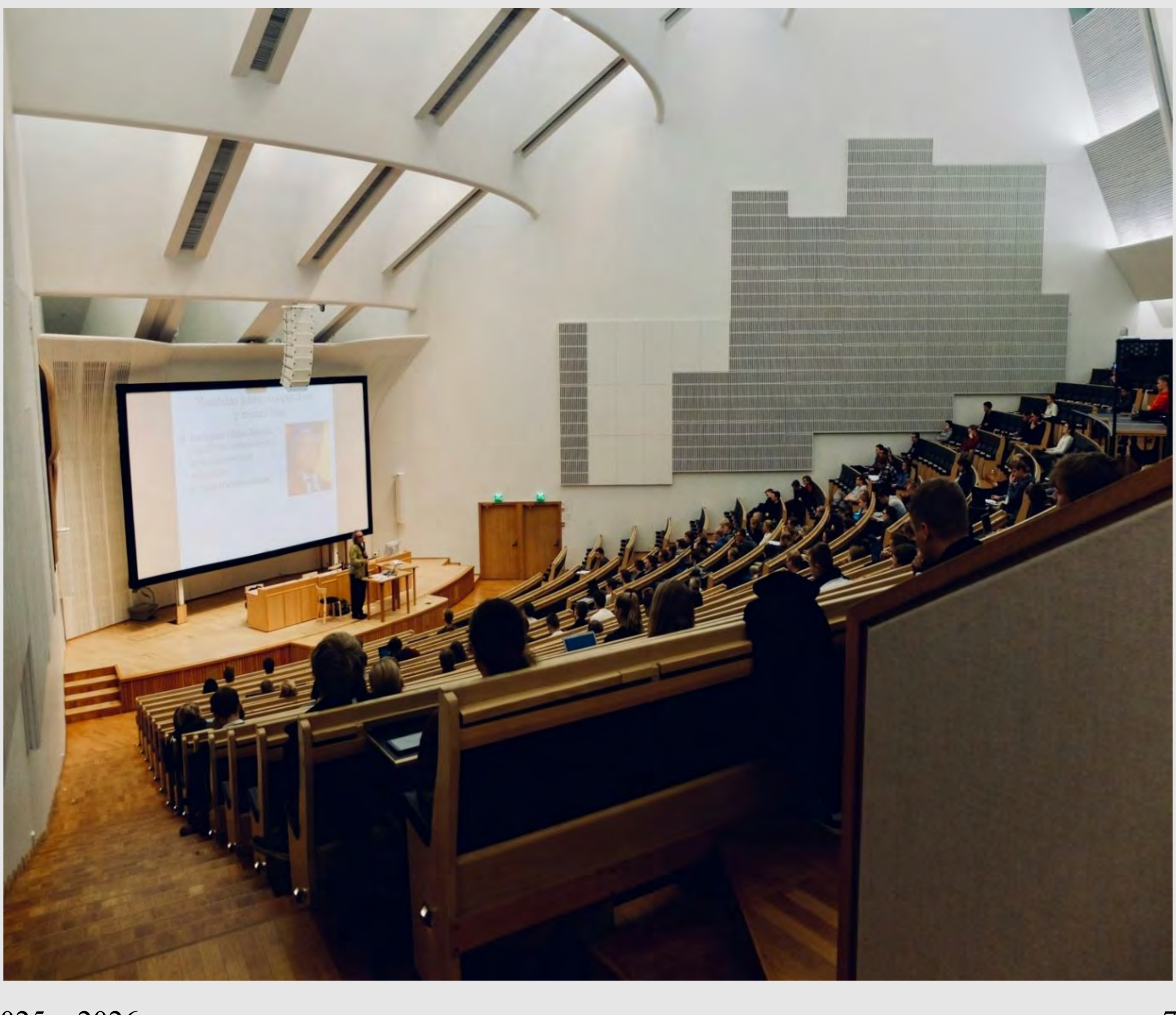
Cooper Smiley received his B.A. and M.A. degrees in Economics from San Diego State University. He is starting his Ph.D. in Public Administration and Policy at the University of Georgia in the fall semester and plans to specialize in health policy. His interests include research into substance use disorders, health program planning in developing countries, and partnership development between public and private-sector organizations.

Yiying Yang
M.A., Economics, San Diego State University
Ph.D. Candidate, Economics, Fordham University

Yiying Yang is a first-year Ph.D. student at Fordham University. Her first year has been an intellectually stimulating journey filled with diverse coursework, insightful discussions, and rigorous analytical challenges. Engaging in advanced economic theories, statistical models, and empirical research methodologies has expanded her understanding of economic principles and their real-world applications. And her collaboration with peers and professors on projects, seminars, and research initiatives has not only enhanced her academic prowess but also nurtured a deeper appreciation for the complexities within the field of economics. She has learned to better balance coursework, research, and extracurricular activities, providing her with a solid foundation to further explore and contribute to the ever-evolving landscape of economic theories and policies in the coming years of her academic pursuit.

Diletta Migliaccio
Ph.D. Candidate, Economics, University of Genoa

Diletta Migliaccio is a Ph.D. student in the Economics and Quantitative Methods program at the University of Genoa, where she specializes in health economics. She is currently a Visiting Doctoral Fellow at CHEPS. Diletta’s research focuses on vaping and consumer risk perception, with a particular interest in behavioral responses to e-cigarette-related policies. Her work at CHEPS explores how public health interventions shape individual choices in the context of emerging nicotine products.



Stata/R Statistical Software Bootcamp

Prior to the Fall 2024 Semester, incoming 1st-year M.S. students Joaquin Arellanes and Nathan Rosenthal, along with senior undergraduate Sam Robert, and even highschooler Vihaan Bhardwaj, took part in a weeklong, comprehensive coding bootcamp centered around Stata and R. Hosted by CHEPS affiliates and, now, SDSU Economics faculty member, Dr. Kyu Matsuzawa, the bootcamp was oriented towards preparing students for the rigor that accompanies being a CHEPS research affiliate as well as their core *Econ 650* course, *Statistical Tools for Economics*.

During their first day, students were introduced to the fundamentals of Stata, which included downloading, organizing, importing, and descriptively analyzing data. Over the course of the week, students became familiarized with a plethora of publicly available datasets, including but not limited to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Current Population Survey (CPS), and American Community Survey (ACS).

In working with these data, attendees learned the meaning of careful coding, to aid in their development as researchers. Finally, on their last day, students replicated their new Stata skills within R. As part of their culminating experience, students were provided with the task of replicating results from one of Dr. Sabia's papers.

Despite its fast-paced and substantive nature, the bootcamp served as an exceptional tool for preparing students in their respective journeys towards becoming applied microeconomic thinkers and data analysts. Routinely, graduate students report that the experience in the Boot Camp was seminal in future applied economics research. New SDSU Prof. Matsuzawa will lead the Summer 2025 Boot Camp.

Social Security Administration Fellowship

Following the annual statistical software bootcamp, Joaquin Arellanes, Nathan Rosenthal, Sam Robert, and Humayun Khan took part in a research fellowship funded by the Social Security Administration, intended to analyze the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Social Security Insurance (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) recipiency amongst LGBT and non-LGBT individuals.

For one week, fellowship recipients attended presentations led by CHEPS Co-director Dr. Yang Liang, who provided a comprehensive breakdown of the mechanisms by which SSI and SSDI are pooled and dispersed. Utilizing their newfound knowledge from both the bootcamp and the SSI/SSDI presentations, students subsequently paired into teams to tackle their research question of interest, leveraging different dataset approaches. Building off their familiarity with ACS, which was acquired in the bootcamp, fellowship recipients also implemented the Household Pulse Survey (HPS), which was specifically designed to measure how citizens were responding to COVID-19.

Research Conference Reflections

Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) and Southern Economic Association (SEA)

[A reflection by M.S. Student, Tony Chuo]

Our trip to National Harbor and Washington, D.C. was a formative experience in my journey as a researcher in economics. First, while attending APPAM in National Harbor, Maryland, I sat in on tons of amazing sessions in applied microeconomics, and I especially enjoyed the scholars in crime and labor economics. During one of the morning sessions, I realized how close CHEPS has brought us to frontier researchers – four professors in attendance were previous guest speakers, and it was great to be able to chat with them outside of the SDSU campus.

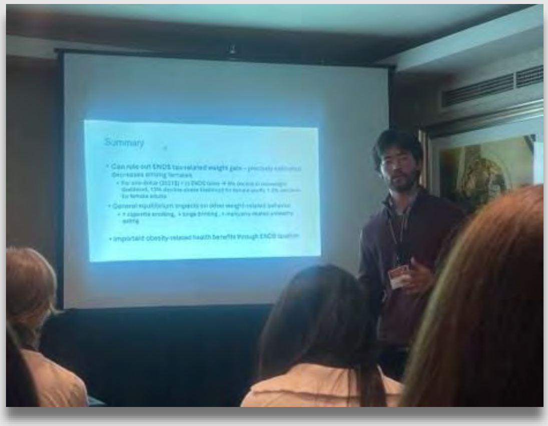
For me, the highlight of our trip was presenting at the SEA conference in Washington, D.C. – my first academic research presentation. Scheduled during Sunday morning's first session, I was up by 5:30 AM, with mine and Christian's breakfast plates a full two hours before go time. For the two weeks leading up to my talk, I learned how to shape a project which I'd spent more than year working on, *E-Cigarette Taxation and Queer Youth*, into a 15-minute presentation. My practice centered on conveying the project's big picture without stumbling over minor details. With the whole CHEPS team in attendance, the presentation went well, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to begin honing my researcher toolkit as a Master's student.

Eastern Economic Association (EEA)

[A reflection by M.S. Student, Yuhao He]

In February, 2025, we traveled to New York City to attend the Eastern Economic Association, where I had the opportunity to attend sessions, network with economists and policy experts. As a CHEPS affiliate, this experience provided both academic enrichment and valuable professional development.

The conference focused on global economic challenges such as climate change, conflict, and shifting geopolitical dynamics, with sessions exploring their macroeconomic and policy implications. One of the most impactful sessions I attended was *"Applied Micro: Policies,"* which brought together researchers presenting empirical work on public health and safety. A standout paper examined the effect of vaping taxes on body weight, coauthored by Dr. Joseph Sabia and colleagues at SDSU. The session highlighted how applied microeconomic research can address timely policy questions using real-world data. Outside the formal sessions, I had some great conversations with researchers working on labor, health, and education. Some of our chats were about how people approach tricky identification issues or deal with messy datasets, while others were just about the kinds of questions that keep us curious. It was refreshing to hear different perspectives, and those exchanges gave me a few ideas for how to shape my own work—both in terms of methods and the bigger picture.



Attending the EEA conference was a great chance to step outside of my usual routine and see what others in the field are working on. I came away with new ideas, useful feedback, and a better sense of where my own research fits into the bigger picture. Some of the most valuable moments weren't just in the sessions, but in the conversations and small interactions throughout the trip. It reminded me how important it is to stay connected to the broader academic community—and how energizing it can be to just talk, listen, and think alongside other people who care about the same questions.

CHEPS Publications 2024 - 2025

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Anderson, D. Mark, Yang Liang, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2024. "Mandatory Seatbelt Laws and Traffic Fatalities: A Reassessment," *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, 39(3): 513–521.

Burkhauser, Richard, Drew McNichols, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2025. "Minimum Wages & Poverty: New Evidence from Dynamic Difference-in-Differences Estimates," Forthcoming, *Review of Economics and Statistics*.

Cesur, Resul, Joseph J. Sabia, and W. David Bradford. 2024. "Did the War on Terror Ignite a Veteran Opioid Epidemic?" Forthcoming, *Health Economics*.

Cotti, Chad, Charles Courtemanche, J. Catherine Maclean, Yang Liang, Erik Nessen, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2024. "The Effect of E-Cigarette Flavor Bans on Tobacco Use," Forthcoming, *Journal of Health Economics*.

Courtemanche, Charles, J. Catherine Maclean, Yang Liang, Caterina Muratori, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2025. "The Effect of E-Cigarette Licensure Laws on Tobacco Use," Forthcoming, *Journal of Health Economics.*

Dave, Dhaval, Andrew Friedson, Kyutaro Matsuzawa, Joseph J. Sabia, and Samuel Safford. 2025. "Black Lives Matter Protests and Risk Avoidance: The Case of Civil Unrest During a Pandemic," Forthcoming, *Journal of Human Resources*.

Dave, Dhaval M., Caterina Muratori, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2025. "The Effects of Recreational Marijuana Legalization on Employment and Earnings," Forthcoming, *Journal of Population Economics*.

De Lucena, Thiago. 2025. "Leadership & Gender Composition in Managerial Positions: Evidence from the Brazilian Public Sector," Forthcoming, *Journal of Human Resources*.

Ferrazares, Toshio, Joseph J. Sabia, and D. Mark Anderson. 2025. "Have U.S. Gun Buyback Programs Misfired?" Forthcoming, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.

Hansen, Benjamin, Jessamyn Schaller, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2024. "In-Person Schooling and Youth Suicides: Evidence from School Calendars and Pandemic Era School Closings," *Journal of Human Resources*, 59(S): S227–S255.

Hansen, Benjamin, Jessamyn Schaller, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2024. “Schools, Job Flexibility, and Married Women’s Labor Supply: New Evidence from the COVID-19 Pandemic,” Forthcoming, *Journal of Human Resources*.

Leonard, Russell and Joseph J. Sabia. 2025. “Vertical ID Laws, Youth Tobacco Use and Teen Drinking,” Forthcoming, *Contemporary Economic Policy*.

Liang, Yang, Mary Lovely, and Hongsheng Zhang. 2025. “Targeted Liberalization: China’s Foreign Investment Regulation Reform and Its Post-WTO-Accession Export Surge,” Forthcoming, *Review of International Economics*.

Matsuzawa, Kyutaro. 2025. “The Deterrent Effect of Salient and Targeted Police Enforcement: Evidence from DUI Checkpoint Bans,” Forthcoming, *Journal of Law and Economics*.

Matsuzawa, Kyutaro, Daniel I. Rees, Joseph J. Sabia, and Rebecca Margolit. 2025. “Minimum Wages and Teen Fertility: A Reconsideration,” Forthcoming, *Journal of Applied Econometrics*.

McNichols, Drew, Joseph J. Sabia, and Gokhan Kumpas. 2025. “Did Expanding Sports Opportunities for Women Reduce Crime? Evidence from a Natural Experiment,” Forthcoming, *Journal of Human Resources*.

Sabia, Joseph J., Dhaval Dave, Fawaz Altaiobi, and Daniel I. Rees. 2025. “The Effects of Recreational Marijuana Legalization on Drug Use and Crime,” Forthcoming, *Journal of Public Economics*.

Zhu, J.L., Chau, N., Rodewald, A., and Garip, F. 2024. “Weather Deviations Linked to Undocumented Migration and Return between Mexico and the United States,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS).

<u>Published Working Papers and Revise-and-Resubmit</u>

Arnesen, Emily and Kyutaro Matsuzawa. 2025. “Sports Gambling Amplifies Emotional Cues & Intimate Partner Violence,” Revise and Resubmit, *Review of Economics and Statistics*.

Beller, Andrea H., Ana Fava, Marouane Idmansour, and Shoshana Grossbard. 2024. “Women, Economics, and Household Economics: The Relevance of Workshops Founded by Nobel Laureate Gary Becker, and of Jacob Mincer,” *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*.

Chuo, Anthony, Chad Cotti, Charles Courtemanche, J. Catherine Maclean, Erik Nessen, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2025. “E-Cigarette Taxes and Queer Youth*,” National Bureau of Economic Research* Working Paper No. 33326.

Churchill, Brandyn, Bijesh Gyawali, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2025. “Anti-Bullying Laws and Weight-Based Disparities in Suicidality,” Revise and Resubmit, *Health Economics*.
Dave, Dhaval, Catherine Maclean, Yang Liang, Caterina Muratori, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2024. “The Effect of E-Cigarette Taxes on Substance Use,” *National Bureau of Economic Research* Working Paper No. 32302.

Dave, Dhaval, Catherine Maclean, Yang Liang, Joseph J. Sabia, and Matthew Braaksma. 2025. “Can Anti-Vaping Policies Curb Drinking Externalities? Evidence from E-Cigarette Taxation and Traffic Fatalities,” *National Bureau of Economic Research* Working Paper No. 30670.

Dave, Dhaval, Yang Liang, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2025. “Robots and Crime,” *National Bureau of Economic Research* Working Paper No. 33603.

Dodini, Samuel, Alexander Willen, and Julia Zhu. 2025. “Union Membership and Native-Immigrant Labor Market Gaps,” Revise and Resubmit, *Economic Journal*.

Grossbard, Shoshana. 2025. “A Feminist Economist’s Perspective on Laws Regulating Marital Property and Fertility,” In What’s a Family?, edited by Alice Margaria and Claire Fenton-Glynn, Bristol University Press, Forthcoming.

Grossbard, Shoshana. 2025. “Household Consumption,” In Encyclopedia of Consumption, edited by José M. Labeaga and José Alberto Molina, Edward Elgar, Forthcoming.

Hansen, Benjamin, Kyutaro Matsuzawa, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2025. “In-Person Schooling and Juvenile Violence,” *National Bureau of Economic Research* Working Paper No. 33317.

Kofoed, Michael, Joseph J. Sabia, and William Skimmyhorn. 2025. “How Do Combat Deployments Affect Veterans’ Health and Labor Market Outcomes? Evidence from the U.S. Army,” Revise and Resubmit, *Journal of Human Resources*.

Muratori, Caterina and Joseph J. Sabia. 2025. “The Effects of Anti-Bullying Laws on Youth Risky Health Behaviors,” Revise and Resubmit, *Journal of Population Economics*.

Zhu, Julia. 2025. “Comparative Immigration Policies and the Resource Effects of International Students in U.S. Higher Education,” Reject and Resubmit, *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*.

Notable Affiliate Research Grants

<u>Joseph J. Sabia</u>

Global Action to End Smoking
Principal Investigator: Joseph J. Sabia
Project Title: "Assessing the Efficacy of Increasing Access to Tobacco Harm Reduction Products: New Evidence on Intended and Unintended Effects"
Dates: March 2024–March 2027
Total Grant Award: $1,647,714

Social Security Administration (University of Wisconsin)
Principal Investigator: Joseph J. Sabia
Project Title: "Disparities in Social Security Program Participation Between LGB and Non-LGB Households: Evidence from the COVID-19 Pandemic"
Dates: September 2024–September 2025
Total Grant Award: $195,996

<u>Brandy Lipton</u>

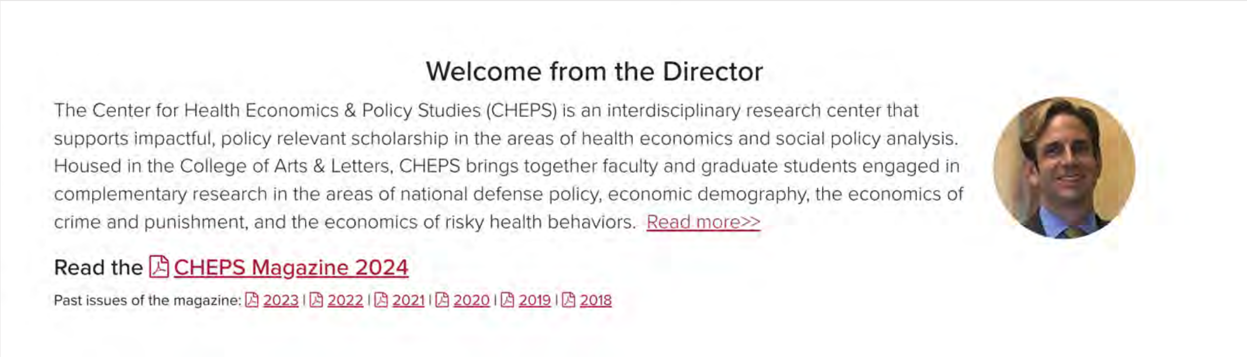
National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR)
Impact of Medicaid Pregnancy Dental Benefits on Dental Care Access among Pregnant People and Young Children (April 2024–March 2028) Total Budget: $1.82 million

National Eye Institute (NEI), National Institutes of Health
Impact of Routine Eye Care Coverage on Access to Eye Care and Fall-related Outcomes among Low-income Medicare Enrollees (R01 EY033746). (June 2022–May 2026) Total Budget: $2.00 million

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), National Institutes of Health
Effect of Hearing Aid Insurance Coverage Requirements for Adults on Utilization (April 2022–March 2026). Total Budget: $275,154.

Website and Social Media

Please learn more about CHEPS at our website: cheps.sdsu.edu
X: @SDSUCHEPS



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