Robert W. Pettis, Jr.

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Research Interests

Economics of Crime, Public Policy

Education

Ph.D. Economics, University of South Carolina	August 2019
Committee Chair: Jason DeBacker	
M.A. Economics, University of South Carolina	May 2015
B.S. Economics, Clemson University, *Summa cum laude*	May 2014
B.S. Double: Finance and Management (Emph: Entrepreneurship, Minor: Music), University of South Carolina	May 2005

Research and Analyst Experience

Data Scientist, Computational Justice Lab, Claremont Graduate University	2020-Current
Visiting Assistant Professor, Dept. of Economics, University of Texas at Arlington	2019-Current
Research Assistant, Dept. of Economics, University of South Carolina	2014-2018
Alexander Matros, Chun-Hui Miao	
Energy Analyst, Pace Global Energy Services (Now Siemens)	2009-2011

Papers Under Review

- "Pride and Prejudice." With Zehra Valencia and Breyon J. Williams
  We examine whether same-sex marriage legalization announcements impact the occurrence of LGBT hate-crimes. We exploit variation in the timing of same-sex marriage legalization announcements across states, using a difference-in-differences design. We find that a same-sex marriage legalization announcement leads to a reduction in the LGBT hate-crime rate of 0.111 per 100,000 people from a base of 0.3. This result is mostly driven by reductions in violent hate-crimes. There is also evidence of a reduction in property hate-crimes. Additional analyses indicate that the effect is stronger in counties with a large share of likely perpetrators. Our results show suggestive evidence that same-sex marriage bans have the opposite effect on the LGBT hate-crime rate. The results demonstrate that salient LGBT-specific policy announcements are effective at reducing hate-crimes based on sexual orientation.

Working Papers

- "Another One Bites the Dust: Peer Effects in High Level Performers". With Eren Bilen
  Using Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) data, we analyze the effect of being put in the house favorite corner as opposed to the underdog corner, despite being favored to lose by the betting market or by ranking. We find that being placed in the favored corner during these circumstances increases the odds of winning by 40 percentage points. These results are robust in a variety of situations, including including/excluding those caught with performance enhancing drugs, fights with high and low purses, and color of fighter clothing.

- How Does Violent Crime Affect Acute Student Outcomes? With James Loveless and Orgul Ozturk
We use geocoded crime data to determine the extent to which violent crime spillovers affect student test scores. We find that students that are exposed to a violent crime the week before an exam, but not the week after, score .05 standard deviations lower on ELA exams than students that are exposed to a violent crime the week after, but not before. We use geocoded crime data to determine the extent to which violent crime spillovers affect student test scores. We find that students that are exposed to a violent crime the week before an exam, but not the week after, score .05 standard deviations lower on ELA exams than students that are exposed to a violent crime the week after, but not before. In particular, white males are the most adversely affected. Additionally, we utilize individual level poverty data and determine that the results are exacerbated if the student is in a high poverty school.
- How Do Ratings Affect App Installations? With Reinhold Kesler and Michael Ward
Using fake reviews crackdowns by Google as an instrument, we analyze the effect of a change in app rating on number of installations.
- "Mile High: How Does Marijuana Legalization Affect Airline Travel?"
Recreational cannabis has been legalized in several states, which could increase demand for travel to these locations. I study the impact that recreational marijuana legalization has on airline travel. Using origin to destination flight data and marijuana legalization and availability dates, I find no evidence of an increase in airline travel as a result of marijuana legalization. The null results are robust to difference-in-differences models and synthetic control models. My initial estimates may be attenuated by business travelers, drivers, or enforcement of marijuana prohibition. I control for these circumstances and still find no effect.
- "How Does Access to Mental Healthcare Affect Crime?" In this paper, I ask if access to mental health care can reduce crimes. In particular, I study the effect of increasing access for those that already have private insurance by exploiting the state and time variation in the adoption of mental health parity man- dates. While not precise, I find evidence to suggest that the most far-reaching of these mandates are effective at curbing crime. I also follow up on prior studies applying this legislation to determine the effect on suicide rates. I similarly no change in suicide rates as a result of this legislation.

Teaching

Intermediate Microeconomics	2020
Independent Study	2020
Applied Microeconomics	2019
Introduction to Econometrics	2019, 2020,2021
Introduction to Economics	2016, 2017, 2018
Principles of Microeconomics	2017-2018, 2020-2021

Conference and Seminar Presentations

University of Texas at Arlington $\times 3$	Arlington, TX, 2020
Claremont Graduate University $\times 2$	Claremont, CA, 2020
Southern Economic Association Conference	Fort Lauderdale, FL, 2019

Fellowships, Honors, and Awards

Darla Moore School of Business Graduate Scholarship	2014-2019
American Housing Federation Scholarship	2015-2017
Master of Arts in Economics Scholarship	2013-2014
Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship	2000-2001

Professional Development Activities and Memberships

Preparing Future Faculty Certificate	2019
American Economics Association Member	2017-Present
Southern Economics Association Member	2019-Present

Departmental Activities and Service

University of South Carolina
   Economics Phd Student Seminar/Workshop Director   August 2017-Spring 2019

Computer Skills

Math/Stat: Stata, R, Maple   Typography: LaTeX
Programming: Python, Visual Basic   Web: HTML, CSS
GIS: ArcMap