Kevin A. Roberts

September 10, 2020

1009 N Buchanan Blvd.
Unit R.
Durham, NC, 27701
kevin.a.roberts@duke.edu
+1 (828) 773-9907

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for the invitation to apply to participate in the 2020 NBER Graduate Student Workshop on Business Income Taxation. I am a 4th year PhD Candidate in Economics at Duke University currently conducting research in public finance. In the following document you will find my curriculum vitae, which includes the requested list of graduate coursework on page three, and a personal statement describing why I hope to attend the workshop. You should have received a recommendation letter from my advisor, Juan Carlos Suárez Serrato, today as well. Please feel free to contact me at the email address or phone number listed above with any questions regarding my application.

Sincerely,

Kevin A. Roberts

Kevin A. Roberts

Contact Information	Department of Economics Duke University Durham, NC	kevin.a.roberts@duke.edu Phone: +1 (828) 773-9907

Research Interests Public Economics, Industrial Organization, Labor Economics

Education

Duke University, Durham, NC
Ph.D., Economics, *Intended:* 2023
M.A., Economics, 2020.

Davidson College
B.A., Economics, *magna cum laude*, 2015.

Works in Progress

1. "How Does Capital Investment Affect Workers? Evidence from Bonus Depreciation and Matched Employer-Employee Data" (joint with E. Mark Curtis, Daniel Garrett, Eric Ohrn, and Juan Carlos Suárez Serrato).

2. "Taxation and Entry in the Commercial Gambling Industry."

Research Positions

Special Sworn Status, U.S. Census	August 2019 to Present
Graduate Research Assistant Juan Carlos Suárez Serrato	August 2019 to Present
Associate Economist Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago	July 2015 to July 2017

Teaching Experience

Duke University, Department of Economics

Instructor, Economic Principles	Summer 2020
Teaching Assistant, Econometrics Instructor: James Roberts	Spring 2019
Teaching Assistant, Time Series Econometrics (MA) Instructor: Rogier Quaedvlieg	Fall 2018

Honors and Awards

Duke Graduate School Summer Research Fellowship	2019
Duke Economics First Year PhD Fellowship	2017
Best Paper Award Eastern Economics Association Conference Undergraduate Sessions	2015
Davidson College C. Louise Nelson Award in Economics	2014

Other Skills Stata, R, SAS, Matlab, Linux/Unix, Python, LaTeX

Graduate Coursework

PhD-Level Field Courses

Duke University, Department of Economics

Graduate Public Finance I and II	Fall 2018
Instructors: Joseph Hotz, Juan Carlos Suárez Serrato	
Partial Identification: Theory and Applications in IO	Fall 2018
Instructors: Allan Collard-Wexler, Adam Rosen	
Quantitative Dynamic Models	Fall 2018
Instructor: Daniel Yi Xu	
Dynamic Discrete Choice Models	Spring 2019
Instructor: Peter Arcidiacono	
Economics of Discrimination and Inequality	Spring 2019
Instructor: Patrick Bayer	
Robustness and Sensitivity	Spring 2019
Instructor: Matthew Masten	
Treatment Effects	Spring 2020
Instructor: Arnaud Maurel	

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Department of Economics

Empirical Industrial Organization I	Fall 2018
Instructor: Brian McManus	
Empirical Industrial Organization II	Spring 2019
Instructor: Jonathan Williams	

University of Chicago Booth School of Business

Time Series Econometrics	Winter 2016
Instructor: Jeffrey Russell	

First-Year PhD Coursework

Duke University, Department of Economics

Microeconomic Analysis I	Fall 2017
Instructors: Philipp Sadowski, Curtis Taylor	
Macroeconomic Analysis I	Fall 2017
Instructors: Craig Burnside, Francesco Bianchi	
Econometrics I	Fall 2017
Instructor: Federico Bugni	
Microeconomic Analysis II	Spring 2018
Instructors: Curtis Taylor, Todd Sarver	
Macroeconomic Analysis II	Spring 2018
Instructors: Cosmin Ilut, Andrea Lanteri	
Econometrics II	Spring 2018
Instructors: Jia Li, Matthew Masten	

Personal Statement

I am an applied microeconomist with an interest in public, industrial organization, and labor economics. My research seeks to understand how public policy affects workers and firms under various market structures. I believe the NBER Graduate Student Workshop on Business Income Taxation would provide the foundational knowledge necessary to advance my research interests. The study of business taxation lends itself particularly well to my research agenda, as, in my experience, the intricacies of firm responses to tax policy can provide the institutional richness common to the study of imperfectly competitive markets in industrial organization. Through the workshop, I hope to deepen my understanding of the current state of research on business taxation and equip myself to make meaningful contributions to the field in the future.

Over the past year, I have primarily focused on two research projects, both on topics in public finance. The first project, entitled "Taxation and Entry in the Commercial Gambling Industry," examines the role of consumption taxes in determining entry behavior in the Illinois Video Gaming Terminal Industry, which comprises almost 7,000 establishments each operating up to five slot machine-like gambling terminals. Because consumption taxes remain fixed through my sample period, I develop and estimate a structural entry model that allows me to identify the effects of counterfactual tax changes. These counterfactuals suggest that increasing the consumption tax associated with gambling would have negligible effects on the tax revenue raised across the state while also reducing the degree to which gambling establishments select into lower-income communities, potentially mitigating the regressivity of gambling externalities. The second project, entitled "How Does Capital Investment Affect Workers? Evidence from Bonus Depreciation and Matched Employer-Employee Data" is joint work with Mark Curtis, Daniel Garrett, Eric Ohrn, and Juan Carlos Suárez Serrato. This project builds on the prior work of my co-authors to investigate further the effects of bonus depreciation, a U.S. tax policy designed to incentivize business investment. We utilize confidential U.S. Census data from the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program to compare the long-run employment and earnings outcomes of workers at firms that are likely more affected by the tax policy to the labor market outcomes of other workers. These results help us address broader issues present in the public finance literature, such as how investment policy may influence inequality across education levels and within firms.

Both of these projects have served as important precursors to my intended dissertation work, in which I plan to investigate how monopsony power in labor markets influences firm and worker outcomes, particularly in response to public policy. Through the former project on commercial gambling, I have gained greater familiarity with structural techniques to account for the endogeneity of market structure, a particularly salient issue in the recent literature on labor market power. Through the latter project, I have received Special Sworn Status with the U.S. Census, which will allow me to utilize data from the LEHD for my dissertation. It has also pushed me to learn more about how firms respond to tax policy. It is in this respect that I believe the NBER Workshop on Business Income Taxation would prove so useful. At my current, early stage of research, I am in the process of determining which sources of policy variation are best suited for my dissertation topic. While there is some precedent for using changes in business taxation policy to calibrate models of imperfect competition in labor markets, I believe there are many other potential avenues that meld the two fields. This workshop seems like an ideal setting to explore these avenues.

Duke University Department of Economics

Juan Carlos Suárez Serrato
Box 90097
Social Sciences 213
Durham, NC 27708

(510) 717-1419 (phone)

jc.suarez@duke.edu
September 10, 2020

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of **Kevin Robert's** application for the Graduate Student Workshop on Business Income Taxation. Kevin is a fourth-year PhD candidate in the economics department and is writing his thesis under my supervision. I was impressed by Kevin's performance in my second year PhD course on Public Finance, so I asked him to work for me as a research assistant. He has proved himself to be a very capable researcher during the last two years.

Kevin has spent extensive time over the past year in the Triangle Research Data Center, where he has worked as a co-author on the early stages of a project with Mark Curtis, Dan Garrett, Eric Ohrn, and myself. This project utilizes confidential, matched employer-employee data from the U.S. Census to investigate the effects of bonus depreciation—a tax policy that incentivizes capital investment—on worker outcomes. His work on this project includes refining empirical strategies, producing the estimates that form our main results, and developing a descriptive model for an early draft to rationalize some of these findings.

Kevin is currently working on two other projects. The first project is an analysis of the Illinois video gambling industry. This project is very interesting since video gambling has grown dramatically over recent years and state and local governments are starting to rely on revenue from taxes on video gambling terminals. However, policymakers have little information on whether these video gambling terminals will cannibalize other forms of gambling revenue or whether gambling establishments target low income people. Kevin collected a very interesting set of data describing the entry of video gambling and estimated a model of the entry decisions of gambling establishments to answer these policy-relevant questions.

The second project that Kevin is pursuing is related to the potential for monopsony in the US labor market. To study this question, Kevin will use restricted data from the Census Bureau. Kevin has been working at the Census RDC with these data he has already submitted a research proposal for his own research agenda.

Kevin's high level of personal initiative and enthusiasm for research make me confident that he will be a highly successful researcher. Kevin is already asking very important questions with some very impressive datasets. Additionally, his interest in business taxation and his access to confidential Census datasets make him an ideal candidate for the Graduate Student Workshop on Business Income Taxation.

Sincerely yours,

Juan Carlos Suárez Serrato

Juan Carlos Suárez Serrato
Associate Professor of Economics
Duke University