

# ELIZABETH LUH

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## CURRENT POSITION

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Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Criminal Justice Administrative Records System, University of Michigan, 2020-present

## EDUCATION

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Ph.D. Economics, University of Houston, 2020

M.A. Economics, University of Houston, 2016

B.S. Economics with honors and Mathematics, University of Oregon, 2014

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Applied Microeconomics, Labor Economics, Public Economics, Economics of Crime and Discrimination

## WORKING PAPERS

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“Criminal court fees, earnings, and expenditures: A multi-state RD analysis of survey and administrative data” joint with Carl Lieberman and Michael Mueller-Smith) *under review*

**Abstract:** Millions of people in the United States face fines and fees in the criminal court system each year, totaling over \$27 billion in overall criminal debt to-date. In this study, we leverage five distinct natural experiments in Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin using regression discontinuity designs to evaluate the causal impact of such financial sanctions and user fees. We consider a range of long-term outcomes including employment, recidivism, household expenditures, and other self-reported measures of well-being, which we measure through a combination of administrative data (Internal Revenue Service tax records; Criminal Justice Administrative Records System) and household surveys (American Community Survey). We find consistent evidence across the range of natural experiments and subgroup analyses of precise null effects on the population, ruling out long-run impacts larger than +/-3.6% on total earnings and +/-4.7% on total recidivism. Failure to find changes in outcomes undermines popular narratives of poverty traps arising from criminal debt but argues against the use of fines and fees as a source of local revenue and as a crime control tool.

“Not So Black and White: Uncovering Racial Bias from Systematically Misreported Trooper Reports” *under review*

Featured in Probable Causation (Episode 63)!

“The Impact of Financial Sanctions in the U.S. Justice System: Regression Discontinuity Evidence from Michigan’s Driver Responsibility Program” (joint with Keith Finlay, Matthew Gross, and Michael Mueller-Smith) *under review*

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

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“Neighborhood Segregation and Gun Violence” joint with Kenneth Whaley

“Effects of Disparate Parking Enforcement on Long-term Outcomes”

“Effect of Early Education on Long-term Educational Outcomes” (joint with Dan Engster, Scott Hofer, and M.C. Sunny Wong)

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### University of Houston

2016–2019

*Instructor of Record*

*Houston, TX*

- Chinese Economy
- Intermediate Microeconomics
- Principles of Microeconomics

## AWARDS AND GRANTS

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- 2021** National Science Foundation, “Effects of Financial Sanctions in the Criminal Justice System,” 2021-2023
- 2019** Dr. Walter J. Primeaux Jr. and Natalie A. Primeaux Scholarship Endowment  
*Awarded to Ph.D. student who has made substantial progress on theses*  
University of Chicago Becker Friedman Institute Price Theory Summer Camp  
Cullen Fellowship Travel Grant, University of Houston  
*Competitive fellowship program to support graduate student travel*
- 2018** Best Graduate Presentation  
*Given for best presentation of a 4th year student in Ph.D. workshop;*  
*Awarded with paid trip to the Southern Economic Association Meetings*
- 2014** Graduate Fellowship, University of Houston

## PRESENTATIONS

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- 2023** Texas Christian University, Western Kentucky University, Vanderbilt University, Bentley University, Workshop on the Economics of Crime for Junior Scholars, NBER Race and Stratification in the Economy, Nebraska Labor Summit, Grand Valley State University, University of Houston Alumni Conference
- 2022** Texas Economics of Crime Workshop, Western Economic Association Annual Conference, Conference of Empirical Legal Studies, Virtual Crime Economics Seminar, APPAM, Southern Economic Association Conference
- 2021** APPAM, Missouri Valley Economic Association Annual Conference
- 2019** Texas Econometrics Camp, Western Economic Association Annual Conference, STATA Texas Empirical Micro Conference (Poster), Missouri Valley Economic Association Annual Conference, University of Houston’s Graduate Research and Scholarship Project
- 2018** Southern Economic Association Conference, STATA Texas Empirical Micro Conference

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

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Referee for *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *American Economic Review*, *The Economic Journal*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*

Moderator for *Association for Mentoring in Economics* Panel Discussion

## PAST WORK EXPERIENCE

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**2018 - 2019** University of Houston Hobby School of Public Affairs, Research Assistant

## OTHER INFORMATION

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Citizenship: U.S.A.

Languages: English (native); Chinese (advanced); French (conversational)