1. Title: Labor Market Outcomes and Time Use During the Coronavirus Outbreak

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3. Abstract:

   This project will study labor market outcomes and time use by US households during the 2020 Coronavirus outbreak. We are particularly interested in the effect of the outbreak on three interrelated areas. First, how did the outbreak impact labor market outcomes such as employment, hours worked, and income. Second, how did the closure of schools and daycare facilities impact the childcare practices and time use of parents? Third, what are the broad patterns of social distancing adopted by households, and how are social distancing practices affected by shocks to labor market outcomes and childcare availability.

   In principle, data sets collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)/US Census Bureau would allow us to address these questions, but unfortunately not in real time. The American Time Use Survey (ATUS) will most likely not be available for several years. The Current Population Survey (CPS) is conducted monthly, but the results are released with a significant lag. The BLS will release the Employment Situation report, based on the CPS, on April 3, but this will only reflect outcomes in the week of March 12, which precedes major effects of the Coronavirus crisis on the labor market. This means that CPS data reflecting the post-Coronavirus labor market will not be available until the May Employment Situation report is released. Further, the micro data associated with this report is released on an additional delay, and may not be available until late May or later.

   In response to this dearth of data, we are launching a bi-weekly online survey. Our goals are to (1) provide a real time picture of the labor market, and (2) to fill the gaps between monthly CPS releases, which is important given the rapidly changing nature of the Coronavirus pandemic.

4. Data description:

   We are launching an online survey in the week of April 6-April 12 covering a representative sample of the US population. The reference week will be the week of March 30-April 5. The basic set of questions will follow the CPS. We will also include questions about labor market outcomes in February 2020, as well as questions on childcare and time (broadly following the ATUS). We plan to conduct the survey every other week.

5. JEL codes for the project: C82, E24, J21, J22, J31

6. Key-words: Employment, Hours Worked, Time use, Survey

7. Project website: https://sites.google.com/view/covid-rps/