

## TRANSCRIPT

### The Work Goes On

**Guest Host: Robert Moffitt**

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#### **Robert Moffitt:**

I've been a very policy-oriented guy my whole life. And this idea of going to Washington and reporting and being a scholar who knows the literature and contributing to policy discussions has always been something I've found very, very rewarding.

#### **Orley Ashenfelter:**

Welcome to [The Work Goes On](#), a podcast from the [Industrial Relations Section at Princeton University](#). I'm your host, [Orley Ashenfelter](#), the Joseph Douglas Green 1895 Professor of Economics emeritus at [Princeton University](#).

In this podcast series of conversations with leading thinkers and practitioners, we are creating an oral history of an entire generation of industrial relations experts and labor economists whose contributions to their fields have been absolutely extraordinary. Our guest today is [Robert Moffitt](#), who is Krieger Eisenhower Professor of Economics at [Johns Hopkins University](#). He is renowned for his work in labor economics and especially for his research on the economics of labor supply and income inequality among a broad range of other topics. Robert, welcome to [The Work Goes On](#).

#### **Robert Moffitt:**

Thank you, Orley.

#### **Orley Ashenfelter:**

Let's begin the discussion by talking about your background. Where did you grow up, Robert?

#### **Robert Moffitt:**

I grew up in Houston, Texas, and my father did not go to college, but he did, after graduating high school became a certified public accountant, a CPA. After being a CPA for a while, he got a job with the oil company, which was very common in Houston, Texas. And even though he didn't have much education he was a great admirer of technical skills. And then his oil company, the people he admired the most were the petroleum engineers. They had the highest technical expertise. So, he said, Robert, you should be an engineer, be a petroleum engineer. So, that was his goal for me. But my mother was a high school... She actually dropped out of school during the depression, but they all both put a very high value in education, so I had a very good set of parents to push me forward.

#### **Orley Ashenfelter:**

I did not realize you're a Texan.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah, I'm a Texan, yep. From Houston, Texas, and I still have a lot of family down there. So, I grew up in an inner-city kind of working-class neighborhood, but then like a lot of people that once my parents got a little bit more money, they moved to the suburbs and I grew up in a suburb of Houston, Texas.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

That's so interesting. I was not aware of that. And I know you went to Rice, which of course is a great technical school. I guess your dad must have been proud.

**Robert Moffitt:**

I was good at math and Rice was good for that. I actually didn't want to go to Rice because it's there in Houston and I wanted to get out. I really didn't like Houston very much, to be perfectly honest. And back when I grew up there, it was not very cosmopolitan, to say the least. It was... Not many people had moved in from the other parts of the country like they did in the 70s and 80s.

It was pretty much Texans and a lot of them had moved there from small towns and farms and ranches and other parts of Texas and I really kind of wanted to get out. But Rice was very cheap, and my parents wanted me to go there because of that so I went there and got a very good education. Rice was very good at university actually, so had a good education and I'm very, very happy to have been an undergraduate there.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Did you do economics there?

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah, I followed the path that so many economists did. I was a math guy, and so I went to Rice, and I placed out of the freshman course and went immediately to advanced, an analysis course with a really brilliant math professor whose capacity for abstract thought was amazing. And so, like a lot of economists I discovered I wasn't probably going to do math after that course, but I took a course, Intro Econ, and I really loved it. And like a lot of the economists I saw, I could use my math in a topic that was relating to the real world. And this was the late 60s. I was in college from 1966 to 1970, and the War on Poverty was going on, civil rights was going on, all kinds of interesting stuff. And so, I was like, well, I can use economics to study these issues, and I can use my math and the graphs and all of that. So, I really liked it and pretty much converted to an economics major almost immediately after that.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

So civil rights must have been quite an issue in Houston?

**Robert Moffitt:**

Oh yeah. Yeah. Houston was active in the Civil Rights Movement just like everywhere back then. And I got interested in race and if we get to my dissertation later, my dissertation was actually on race, and I got interested in racial differentials. The only problem with Rice was I don't think they had a labor economics course. I certainly didn't take one if they had one, and this idea of Applied Micro wasn't quite there yet. So, I took a lot of sociology courses too. I have an interest in sociology, and I took some courses there in sociology and that kind of related... I could see the relationship between a lot of the

issues they were discussing and economics. So, I kind of developed an interest in sociology at the same time.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

That's interesting that Rice had a sociology program. It's always thought of as a very highly... I'm sure your dad was proud, he probably thought you might be a petroleum engineer after all. Now you've got your Ph.D. at Brown, which is... Providence, Rhode Island has got to be just about the opposite of Houston, Texas, I would guess.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah. To be honest, I was kind of eager to get out of Texas. My parents were Republicans. Everybody was Republicans, but I went to undergraduate and I was a Democrat, so I kind of wanted to get out and wanted go to the East Coast preferably. But yeah, I got into Brown and got a full scholarship, and money was still an important issue there. So, I got into some other places without money, so I went to Brown. It was actually not a good choice for me. Brown today is an excellent department, but back then, and you probably know this Orly, back then in 1970 not every department had a strong applied micro group back then. Applied micro was kind of just beginning really. And modern labor economics didn't really start until the late 60s, early 70s. And Brown was a very good department. But they had almost nobody in Applied Micro. They had mostly theorists and a lot of macro theorists and micro theorists. Your predecessor, there, George Borts was there.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

I remember him. Well, your predecessor too.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah, my predecessor too.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Yes, for those listening, it's because Robert was editor of the *American Economic Review*, something I also did prior to the time he did it

**Robert Moffitt:**

Way back, way back. George Borts. Yeah. Even to be honest, I'm sure he didn't admit this, tell anybody, but he actually gave a few papers to the grad students.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

And who did you work with then at Brown?

**Robert Moffitt:**

Because there weren't really any applied micro people there, I ended up working with an urban economist named Benjamin Chinitz, Ben Chinitz, and you probably don't know him. He was very active in urban... in the late 50s and early 60s, but he wasn't particularly econometrically oriented, so I didn't get a lot of good training there. But he was very interested in urban policy. And so that's what I did in my thesis on. I was really an urban economist, but back then, you all may not know this Orley, but the study of poverty and low-income families, and it kind of started in urban really. And it was regarded as a

problem of the cities. And so, I wanted to study poverty and race issues, but it was in an urban context. So, I actually became an urban economist, but I really did labor. There were no labor economists there.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

What was your dissertation about?

**Robert Moffitt:**

It was about what at the time was called the mismatch hypothesis. And that was a hypothesis that the Harvard urban economist John Kain, K-A-I-N, very well-known guy back then, he had this hypothesis that in the 1950s manufacturing, which had originally really stayed in the cities, small companies didn't take very much square feet, but they expanded, and they started moving to the suburbs in the 1950s. And he had this hypothesis that that was very damaging to less educated Black workers in the cities. And the reason was that the transportation networks then, as now really, were all on a spoke system designed to bring people from the suburbs into the cities. And if you wanted to get from the inner city out to the suburbs to one of these manufacturing plants, the transportation networks are not set up for that. And the difference between Black and white workers in cities [was] that white workers could move to the suburbs and be closer to those firms, whereas racial segregation reduced that possibility for Black workers. So, it's called the mismatch hypothesis, this mismatch between the location of black workers and where their jobs were moving to. So, I did my dissertation on that. It was okay. I ran some regressions.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

What did you find out? I am familiar with this. It was an idea that was around for a long time. What did you think of it?

**Robert Moffitt:**

I just ran a straightforward regression across most metro areas. Nobody did diff-in-diff back then, so it was purely cross sectional, but on how much the manufacturing had [inaudible 00:11:10] the suburbs, I regressed Black workers' wages and employment rates across cities on that variable. And I found it did in fact disadvantage them. So, I kind of confirmed the hypothesis. I don't think the problem is nearly as bad today because racial segregation has gone way down. There are a lot of black suburbs today, but back then it was a serious problem, and I found supporting evidence for it.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

It's interesting. It's kind of disappeared from most discussions, and I'm not sure exactly why. I didn't realize this until I looked more closely. The next thing you did, you left Providence, Rhode Island, and moved to New Jersey.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah, well, my immediate job was Gary, Indiana, and then I later went back to Princeton. So, well, to tell you the truth, Orley, there was nobody in my department at Brown who did Applied Micro. And in fact, the faculty soured on me a little bit, to be perfectly honest, because I was this guy who wanted the run regressions all the time and they didn't really see the point of that. And plus, at Brown, I started hanging out over at the sociology department a little bit and talking to all demographers over there because I had already developed an interest in sociology and the chairman in the department, little story here one time the chairman said, "I want you to come to my office, Robert, to have a serious talk to." I went in

the chairman's department at Brown there, and he said, "Don't you want to move to the sociology department, the stuff you're doing? This is not economics." But anyway, so I somehow found the courage to say, "No, I'm an economist."

But anyway, I went on the job market and the thesis was okay, but didn't do all that great. But these negative income tax experiments were going on at that time, as you know, you did work on them. And there was one out in Gary, Indiana. And I had a little kind of an old boys' network connection there because the guy running the experiment out in Gary, Indiana had gone to grad school with a guy I worked with one summer in Washington, a guy named Dan Radner, actually son of Roy Radner. But I'd worked with him, and he put in a good word for me. So, I got an offer from that NIT experiment out in Gary, Indiana, and that's where I went, and I really loved it.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

I know you worked on it. I wanted to bring that up. But you did end up at Rutgers, I guess, while you were working on the Gary Experiment?

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah, so what happened was I went out to Gary and didn't spend too much time there because it was winding down. But then the whole thing moved back to Mathematica over in Princeton Junction.. So, we moved lock, stock, and barrel to Mathematica and all the staff, and I spent some time there analyzing the data. You may not remember, I occasionally attended your industrial relations seminars at the Dinky from Princeton Junction over there. And I actually precepted in EC one under Burt Malkiel for a while too. It was fun.

But I stayed there at Mathematica, and I started publishing stuff a little bit on the NIT experiments. I was starting to get the publication record up a little bit, but the problem was the NIT experiment wound down, and we did our final report on the Gary experiment, and I started writing papers. But if you're in a place like Mathematica, you raise your own salary, okay, you've got to write proposals; you've got to get contracts; and you got to work on whatever where the money is that you had to work on. And they had excellent staff, Mathematica, very highly skilled people, but I decided I didn't really want to do that. So, I decided to go become an academic. And I had some publications, but not really enough to get a good job. And I had to connect... and good another old boys' network. There's no old girls' network at that time. Only old boys' network, but a guy named Mike Taussig. You remember Mike?

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Oh, he was great. He was a terrific friend of mine.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah, yeah, I know you guys were friends.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

And we did some work together. He was a great friend and such a great sense of humor. He died too young. I'm sorry.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Great sense of humor. Great sense of humor, really liked Mike. And I had met him because of my work, and he worked on some similar things. So, he had an opening at Rutgers up the road, a few stops on the

Amtrak line up in New Brunswick. So, they had an opening, so Mike hired me. It was also very convenient. I could keep doing consulting for Mathematica and hop on Amtrak and go down to the Princeton Junction there, and I went to Rutgers. Mark Killingsworth was there. I had already met Mark because he worked on the NIT experiments, and he was, of course very, very interested in static labor supply models. And he was working on his kind of exhaustive book, reviewing all the work, exhaustive and exhausting at the time. So, at least I had one person there at Rutgers who I really could talk to all the time and that was Mark. So, that was my beginning of my academic career.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

It's very interesting. How long did you stay at Rutgers?

**Robert Moffitt:**

I stayed there in residence about three years, three to four years. Then I took, did some visiting positions, and then I came back before moving again. But here's the story of what happened, and it was kind of the major turning point in my career really, was that some people at Wisconsin wrote a review article for the JEL. One of them was Bob Haverman, who you know, I think, wasn't he an AER co-editor?

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Yeah. Yeah. He was one of the first editors I recruited.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah, Bob Haverman. And he co-authored a JEL paper with a couple of other Wisconsin people, a guy named Bob Plotnik and Sheldon Danziger. And it was a review of labor supply effects of welfare programs. So, I read this article, and I said, man, they got half of it wrong. That was my wheelhouse. I knew that stuff. So, I was just an obscure assistant professor in Rutgers, and they didn't know who I was. So, I wrote a four-page single space letter to them with all the stuff that they had missed and all my insights and stuff like this. And I put it in the mail, what you did those days.

And then I got another letter back from Bob Haverman and he said, "Moffitt, who are you? Why don't you come out to Wisconsin immediately and leave there?" And that was really the turning point because I went out and visited Wisconsin and the Institute for Research on Poverty was there. And that's where all the NIT experiments, the original ones, the New Jersey experiment, and all the others had started. So, I met all the people at the institute and developed really a lifelong what's been a lifelong relationship with the Poverty Institute, but the economics department, then Orley, it was an amazingly good department. They had Art Goldberger, of course, and we all grew up on his econometrics textbook. We had Chuck Manski; we had Gary Chamberlain. Okay. You had even Mike Rothschild was there at that time, who you of course know very well.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Let's talk for a minute. I actually just read recently, I had never read the whole thing before. Your final report on the Gary negative income tax experiments. I guess we should explain for people that this was a period when the Office of Economic Opportunity financed a bunch of field experiments. This is long before field experiments became the primary way in which a lot of economics is done as it is today. These were way, way before that. And there was one in New Jersey, an NJNIT maybe, New Jersey Income negative income tax experiment. And there was a rural one. In fact, I commented on it at one point, and there was another one on Seattle and Denver. And then you worked on the Gary Experiment,

which as I recall included only Black people. Isn't that right? The city was heavily Black, so mostly African-Americans were in the experiment.

**Robert Moffitt:**

That's absolutely correct. It was the only one that was all one race, which had some advantages and disadvantages as well. So, that was one of its unique features. But I'm glad you filled everybody in Orley because lots of people don't know that we had some social experiments, some RCTs.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Oh yeah. It wasn't just social experiments and negative income tax. It was a housing experiment. Field experiments were very, very common back in the 1970s.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Health insurance experiment.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

That more or less made us all have to have HMOs.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah. Well, I developed my interest in econometrics. Well, I had an interest in econometrics anyway, but the NIT, there were so many interesting issues. Then that came up. And one of my first papers actually was review paper of all the NIT experiments and including the econometric issues you have, well, just RCT econometrics, but you had attrition problems. And so, I got interested in attrition because people were dropping out and they were dropping out at different rates in the experimental control.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Of course, they got paid if they stayed in the experimental group.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's a money issue. And you had what was called the limited duration problem, which is that it's only three years long, so does that extrapolate to a permanent program or not. And a guy named Chuck Metcalf at Wisconsin wrote an AER paper on that.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

He wrote a very nice little paper explaining the gap. Of course, in the Seattle experiments, they actually varied the length of time. So, they even had a 20-year experiment in principle, although I think they bought...

**Robert Moffitt:**

That's right. You did some papers on these NIT experiments too, so you know it very well.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Did you think the Gary experiment was clean? I've always got the impression that so many problems that people didn't have way to cope with, mainly about the data collection. In other words, the survey

sampling. A lot of that caused attrition that was different across the treatments and controls. Did you think the Gary experiment was pretty clean because your results were, the ones you report anyway, are very clean, looked like very straightforward results.

**Robert Moffitt:**

I think the Gary experiment was pretty well run. They had the same problems everybody had. The worst problem with all the NIT experiments, Orley, back then, and you probably remember this, but they all had a particular design the way they were designed. I remember that there was something called the Watts-Conlisk model.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

I remember. They didn't do simple randomization; they were trying to maximize something.

**Robert Moffitt:**

It was an interesting model because... Very different than today. So, they wrote down a parametric labor supply function as a function of guarantees and tax rates. And they say, "We want to allocate people to an experimental control group and different plans to minimize the standard errors on this parametric function," very different than what they do today. But the problem was, they said, "Well, certainly the response is going to vary by income." If you're a low-income person and eligible for a big benefit versus a somewhat higher-income person. So, they allocated people to plans by income. And so you had the control for... You couldn't even do a simple experimental control group comparison because the experimental groups had different income distribution.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Well, that's right. You could do it if you did it within group, but the design was ludicrously too complicated.

**Robert Moffitt:**

I mean, really bad, really bad. It's way too complicated.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

No one had ever been in the field with these things, and today nobody would do it that way because...

**Robert Moffitt:**

Oh, No, no, no.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

But anyway, the results that you found, I just looked at them and I was kind of interested because it looked to me, if you use the labor force participation rate as if the male heads of household had a small decline, maybe five percentage points. The female heads did too, maybe five percentage points, although their base was much lower, and then the married spouses, the female spouses, didn't have any decline. Is that a rough summary of what you found?

**Robert Moffitt:**



Yeah, that's a rough summary. I think the results aligned with what everybody knew already, which was that women have larger labor supply elasticity. So, the women's were a little bit larger than the men's. I mean, the odd part about the experiment, Orley, was that the whole point of the negative income tax that Milton Friedman proposed was to lower the marginal tax rate, the benefit reduction rate. It was a hundred percent with the AFDC program. He wanted to lower it. And when you ran regressions and did not just the overall but just guarantee some tax rates, you didn't find much impact on the tax rates.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

It's very hard. I know. I spent 25 years trying to measure income with substitution effects without ever really thinking I ever did it very well.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Well. You worked on it. So much for the negative income tax, but I wrote some papers explaining why that was, but that was the result.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

And then you were back to Brown, I guess, and you taught there, and you brought Applied Micro to Brown.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah. Well, so I returned from Wisconsin, went back to Rutgers, and decided I had published reasonable number of things by then and decided I wanted to go on the market. So, Brown hired me back. I guess they decided I wasn't so bad after all. And so, they had an opening and they hired me back in part because this was when, that was 1984. They still didn't have anybody in Applied Micro in 1984.

And they said, "Hey." And they finally realized, "We got to have some people in Applied Micro. So, how about Moffitt? He's done okay after all." So, they hired me to kind of build it up. And so I went there and the first person I hired was an econometrician from the UK named Tony Lancaster, who worked on event history of models. Little footnote on that. So, Tony Lancaster came over, he was at the University of Hull, not a very high-ranking place in the UK. And he said, "Okay, I'll come to Brown, but I have these two Dutch grad students that I met when I was over in the Netherlands, and can I bring them along as graduate students?" And I said, "Sure, sure, if they're good." And so one of them, the name was Guido Imbens.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Who won the Nobel Prize in economics a couple of years ago.

**Robert Moffitt:**

I was on his committee, Tony Lancaster's advisor, but he came to Brown, and I think he almost failed intro macro. In the Netherlands, you specialize early. He had no knowledge, so he almost failed micro.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Josh Angrist had the same problem at Princeton. He didn't like macro either. Yeah. Yeah. I'd like to move on to one more thing. I know you're at Johns Hopkins now and went there and actually had an appointment, at least in part in the School of Public Health. Robert, you have done an astonishing number of public service activities over your career. I think it's almost more than anybody I can think of.

You've been very active. You're a member of the National Academy of Sciences, which is an extremely rare thing for any economist to aspire to. I realize that Hopkins, you're not too far away from Washington DC but you've been involved with many of their projects where they're asked to... For those that don't know, National Academy of Sciences was started by Abraham Lincoln. The idea was to give advice on science matters to government agencies. And you've been involved in many of them. What were the one or two or three, because you did more than one many, what were a couple that you thought were the most interesting and important?

**Robert Moffitt:**

Sure. Yeah. I have done a lot of that kind of work. I've been very policy-oriented guy my whole life. And this idea of going to Washington and reporting and being a scholar who knows the literature and contributing to policy discussions has always been something I've found very rewarding. I'll mention a couple of the National Academy Science committees. One was back in the early 2000s, well early, late 90s, early 2000s when welfare reform was going on, and it was mostly methodological. How do you evaluate welfare reform? And so it was kind of an evaluation report. Do you want to use RCTs? Do you want to use diff-in-diff? And you have the basic problem that the 1996 welfare bill happened nationwide, so you had no control group. All states had to enact the law at the same time. So, I was charged with that, and I just had a really good committee, and we proposed some RCT work to hold out some people in a control group and not convert them to the new law. We proposed a lot of diff-in-diff stuff.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

We should say. RCT is a randomized control trial. So it's basically randomized-

**Robert Moffitt:**

Randomized controlled trials.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Randomized people into a treatment and control group.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Back then, a state could apply for what's called a waiver. And even though the law said you have to do this, they got permission to hold out some people and not immediately at least apply the law to them. So, that was for a randomized experiment. That was an opportunity there. And I found those really good... I mean, I found it very rewarding. The other committee I'll mention was much more recent back in 2019, and I should say the National Academy of Sciences were exactly Orley, it was founded a hundred years ago, but it's supposed to provide expert advice to the federal government. And a lot of the committees are actually commissioned by Congress. So, the one I served on back in 2019, Congress actually gave money to national economists and said, "we want you to figure out how to reduce the child poverty rate by fifty percent in 10 years. Come back to us with your answer."

So, I had pretty good committee. And we studied a whole bunch of stuff and came up with a whole package. And the other thing we did that no committee had done before was you actually estimated labor supply disincentives of different programs. And that was unheard of in Washington. No one is paying attention to the disemployment effects, but we did that, which reduces the poverty impact. Anyway, we came up with a whole package of things that we thought could do. It cost a lot of money, of course, but with due consideration to both labor supply effects and coverage and things like that. And

the interesting thing was, one of the things we proposed, we didn't quite call it this, which called a child tax credit, an expanded child tax credit. There's already one in the law right now. If you're a low income, well, not strictly low income, but low income below a certain level, you file your taxes and if you have children, you can get a credit back when you file your returns in March and April.

And that was one of ours that we thought, some design issues, expanding the child credit was already there. And then in 2020 what happened was Biden got elected and in 2021 he proposed the child tax credit during the pandemic. It was one of his signature themes. He could only get Congress to authorize it for one year and Congress wouldn't renew it. So, he also has expanded child credit. But our report took off because everybody was talking about it. So, much more influence than I've ever had for anything I've ever done before. But that really, as far as National Academy of Science reports and social sciences, that's probably one of the most leading cited, well-known ones. So, that was lots of fun.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Interesting that you say that because the decline in child poverty in that period is attributed much to that, and then the increase since I guess, has been a result of the fact that it was eliminated.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Exactly. Well, it's the first recession... The pandemic recession is the first recession in modern history where the poverty rate went down. I mean, of course, it always goes up. And because of the enormous generosity, not only this child tax credit, but UI was greatly expanded too, and all kinds of programs were expanded, and the poverty rate actually went down in 2020 in the height of the pandemic, double-digit unemployment rates, and then all the programs were taken away, and the poverty rate went right back up to what it was before the pandemic recession. So, there you have it. That's kind of pretty simple evidence, I think.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

So, this is an example. I hadn't really thought of it that way, of a pretty big natural, natural experiment, a pre and a during and a post. So, I guess you explained how to reduce child poverty, and it happened, and now it's going back to, so apparently there wasn't really the will to keep it going.

**Robert Moffitt:**

Yeah. Well, it's an issue in our current presidential campaign too. I won't get into that. But anyway, it was very interesting natural experiment. There's been some debate about the disemployment effects, but one of the things I believe to be the case is that... I think there are labor supply disincentives of welfare programs. They're not zero. I mean, there are some labor supply disincentives, but they aren't that large when the unemployment rates are very high because there aren't any jobs anyway. And there have been some studies of the child tax credit during 2020, almost no labor supply disincentive effects whatsoever. Now, you may not want it during full employment times. That's a different issue, but at least during the recession it doesn't seem to have any effect.

**Orley Ashenfelter:**

Effect. Yeah. Robert, it's been absolutely charming to talk to you, and I'm so glad we could touch on these public policy issues. It's just been a great pleasure to have you here.

Our guest today has been [Robert Moffitt](#), Krieger-Eisenhower Professor of Economics at [Johns Hopkins University](#). Please join us again for the next episode of [The Work Goes On: an Oral History of Industrial](#)

[Relations and Labor Economics](#) from the [Industrial Relations Section at Princeton University](#). I'm your host, Orley Ashenfelter. Thanks for listening.

**Announcer:**

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