



John Whitley Receives 2022 Larry D. Welch Award for Best External Publication

ALEXANDRIA, VA (November 2022) – John Whitley, Ph.D., received the 2022 Larry D. Welch Award for Best External Publication for “Deterring Illegal Entry: Migrant Sanctions and Recidivism in Border Apprehensions.” The article was published in *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, Vol. 13, No. 3, August 2021. Whitley is an adjunct research staff member in the Cost Analysis and Research Division (CARD) at one of the three federally funded research and development centers operated by IDA.

IDA established the award in 2011 in honor of retired U.S. Air Force General Larry D. Welch, who was IDA’s president from 1990 to 2003 and again from 2006 to 2009.

Whitley’s fellow award recipient is co-author Sarah John, CARD assistant director. Other co-authors are Bryan Roberts, former CARD adjunct research staff member; Samuel Bazzi, University of California, San Diego; and Gordon Hanson, Harvard Kennedy School.

“The authors’ article exemplifies General Welch’s high standards of analytic excellence and relevance,” said IDA President Norty Schwartz.

The authors used previously unavailable records on Mexican nationals apprehended for illegally entering the U.S. to assess the effectiveness of U.S. Border Patrol sanctions imposed during 2008-2012. Estimates were derived from the authors’ adapted method of random variation in the rollout of new sanctions across different border sectors. Their findings imply that the U.S. sanctions accounted for 28% to 44% of the decline in recidivism as observed in the number of re-apprehensions. These findings suggest that sanctions may be a cost-effective strategy for deterring illegal entry, an important step in designing viable immigration policy.

“It’s an honor for the team to be recognized by IDA,” said Whitley. “It was a privilege to work alongside my co-authors on this critical research effort.”

Whitley earned his bachelor’s degree in agricultural and applied economics and animal science from Virginia Tech. He earned his master’s degree and doctoral degree in economics from the University of Chicago.

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