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Relation of the Directors to the Work and Publications of the NBER

1. The object of the NBER is to ascertain and present to the economics profession, and to the public more generally, important economic facts and their interpretation in a scientific manner without policy recommendations. The Board of Directors is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the work of the NBER is carried on in strict conformity with this object.

2. The President shall establish an internal review process to ensure that book manuscripts proposed for publication DO NOT contain policy recommendations. This shall apply both to the proceedings of conferences and to manuscripts by a single author or by one or more co-authors but shall not apply to authors of comments at NBER conferences who are not NBER affiliates.

3. No book manuscript reporting research shall be published by the NBER until the President has sent to each member of the Board a notice that a manuscript is recommended for publication and that in the President’s opinion it is suitable for publication in accordance with the above principles of the NBER. Such notification will include a table of contents and an abstract or summary of the manuscript’s content, a list of contributors if applicable, and a response form for use by Directors who desire a copy of the manuscript for review. Each manuscript shall contain a summary drawing attention to the nature and treatment of the problem studied and the main conclusions reached.

4. No volume shall be published until forty-five days have elapsed from the above notification of intention to publish it. During this period a copy shall be sent to any Director requesting it, and if any Director objects to publication on the grounds that the manuscript contains policy recommendations, the objection will be presented to the author(s) or editor(s). In case of dispute, all members of the Board shall be notified, and the President shall appoint an ad hoc committee of the Board to decide the matter; thirty days additional shall be granted for this purpose.

5. The President shall present annually to the Board a report describing the internal manuscript review process, any objections made by Directors before publication or by anyone after publication, any disputes about such matters, and how they were handled.

6. Publications of the NBER issued for informational purposes concerning the work of the Bureau, or issued to inform the public of the activities at the Bureau, including but not limited to the NBER Digest and Reporter, shall be consistent with the object stated in paragraph 1. They shall contain a specific disclaimer noting that they have not passed through the review procedures required in this resolution. The Executive Committee of the Board is charged with the review of all such publications from time to time.
7. NBER working papers and manuscripts distributed on the Bureau’s web site are not deemed to be publications for the purpose of this resolution, but they shall be consistent with the object stated in paragraph 1. Working papers shall contain a specific disclaimer noting that they have not passed through the review procedures required in this resolution. The NBER’s web site shall contain a similar disclaimer. The President shall establish an internal review process to ensure that the working papers and the web site do not contain policy recommendations, and shall report annually to the Board on this process and any concerns raised in connection with it.

8. Unless otherwise determined by the Board or exempted by the terms of paragraphs 6 and 7, a copy of this resolution shall be printed in each NBER publication as described in paragraph 2 above.
Anyone who has ever run a conference knows about the enormous organizational effort that is required. The annual Tax Policy and the Economy conference is certainly no exception. This conference has been enormously successful for the past 26 years thanks to a tremendous team effort on the part of the NBER staff, authors, and participants.

Leading the list of those I wish to thank is Jim Poterba, the president of the NBER. Jim was the organizer and editor of the Tax Policy and the Economy series for most of the series’ existence. As NBER president, Jim continues to provide his wise counsel and assistance.

I am also incredibly grateful to Carl Beck, Lita Kimble, and especially Rob Shannon for their superb organization of the conference and to Helena Fitz-Patrick for expertly guiding us through the publication process.

I also want to offer a special thanks to the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation for its continued financial support of the research presented at this meeting.

Our keynote speaker this year was Doug Elmendorf, the director of the Congressional Budget Office. Doug is himself a former contributor to the Tax Policy and the Economy conference (in a coauthored paper with former NBER president Martin Feldstein). We are grateful to Doug for sharing his keen insights into the current and longer-term fiscal challenges facing the United States and the difficult tax and spending choices that result.

Naturally, I wish to thank the authors for writing careful and thought-provoking papers and the audience for their helpful feedback on the ideas being presented. It is exactly this type of interaction and engagement between researchers and the policy community that make the Tax Policy and the Economy conference such a worthwhile endeavor.