M-RCBG awards John T. Dunlop Undergraduate Thesis Prize to Aden Barton

CAMBRIDGE MA – The Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government (M-RCBG) at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government is pleased to announce the 2024 winner of the John T. Dunlop Undergraduate Thesis Prize in Business and Government.


The John T. Dunlop Thesis Prize in Business and Government is awarded to graduating seniors who write the best thesis on a challenging public policy issue at the interface of business and government. The prize carries a $2000 award.

This year’s winning thesis by Mr. Barton examines the ongoing Medicaid Unwinding, in which millions have been removed from public insurance based on a state’s caseload prioritization. He finds that disenrollment increases the likelihood of being on private insurance and of being uninsured, and reduces the likelihood of enrollees and disenrollees working in the last week by about 5 percentage points, as individuals likely reduced their labor supply to maintain eligibility. His findings also indicate an increased household financial strain, most conclusively by greatly raising the likelihood individuals delay medical treatment.

In explaining why the Center chose to award the John Dunlop Prize to Mr. Barton this year, John A. Haigh, Co-Director of M-RCBG, said that “Aden’s thesis was impressive in its conception and execution. It represents the type of excellent analysis and policy recommendations at the intersection of business and government that we value so highly here at the Center.”

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John T. Dunlop, the Lamont University Professor Emeritus, was a widely respected labor economist who served as dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences from 1969 to 1973. An adviser to many U.S. presidents, beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dunlop was secretary of labor under Gerald Ford, serving from March 1975 to January 1976. In addition to serving as secretary of labor, Dunlop held many other government posts, including: director of the Cost of Living Council, (1973-74), chairman of the Construction Industry Stabilization Committee (1993-95), chair of the Massachusetts Joint Labor-Management Committee for Municipal Police and Firefighters (1977-2003) and Chair of the Commission on Migratory Farm Labor (1984-2003).

Dunlop served as the second director of the Center for Business and Government from 1987 to 1991. The Center, renamed in 2005 as the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government, focuses on policy issues at the intersection of business and government. Dunlop died in 2003.