



HARVARD Kennedy School

MOSSAVAR-RAHMANI CENTER
for Business and Government

For Immediate Release:
May 23, 2023

Contact: Victoria Groves-Cardillo
617-495-5970

M-RCBG awards John T. Dunlop Undergraduate Thesis Prize to Ishan Bhatt

CAMBRIDGE MA – The Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government (M-RCBG) at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government is pleased to announce the 2023 winner of the John T. Dunlop Undergraduate Thesis Prize in Business and Government.

Ishan Bhatt has won for his thesis, *Yes, Literally, In My Backyard: The Effect of "Gently" Upzoning Single-Family Neighborhoods*. He is graduating from Harvard College this week with an A.B. in Applied Mathematics.

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 \$1000 award.

This year’s winning thesis by Mr. Bhatt examines the effect of several attempts to deregulate housing infill in California on housing supply, rents, and nearby property values. He finds that supply constraints strongly predict accessory dwelling unit (ADU) construction, suggesting ADUs are filling gaps in rental supply. However, a linear panel model shows that ADU construction is insufficient to decrease rent.

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

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.