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Robert Ferber and Werner Z. Hirsch

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SOCIAL EXPERIMENTATION AND
ECONOMIC POLICY

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Social experimentation and economic policy

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PREFACE

Although there has been much experimentation – and information about experimentation – on issues in other fields of endeavor, especially education and psychology, there has been little work of this type in economics and even less information. Not until the past dozen years, in fact, have we seen any appreciable social experimentation on economic issues with real populations. Nevertheless, the growing interest in evaluating the effectiveness of social programs makes it likely that this type of experimentation will increase in the future. For those social experiments in economics that have been carried out, a fair amount of technical material has been published, but hardly any material of a general evaluative nature has appeared except for the survey articles by the authors of the present volume.

The objective of this volume is to provide an overview and a synthesis of the social experiments in economics, based on these review articles. The level of presentation is relatively simple and requires only a knowledge of elementary microeconomic theory and some statistics. Hence, this volume should be of use not only to professional economists and graduate students in economics but also to policymakers and to undergraduates majoring in economics. For those interested in investigating particular social experiments in greater detail, the references cited in the chapters dealing with those experiments should be very helpful.

The authors would like to thank Mark Perlman and Robert Lamp-

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ROBERT FERBER
WERNER Z. HIRSCH

It is with deep sadness that I must add a lonely postscript to this Preface. Bob Ferber died on September 8, 1981, after a brief illness, and after having corrected proofs but, sadly, before having seen the book in print.

He will be missed – not only by his wife Marianne, son Don, and daughter Ellen, to whom he was devoted, but also by myself and many others for whom he was colleague, teacher, collaborator, and friend. His warm, self-effacing personality and wry humor were special, endearing qualities.

The profession respected Robert Ferber for his contributions to statistics and survey methods, research on Latin America, and consumer expenditure research. His contributions were many, including those as editor of the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, the *Journal of Consumer Research*, and the *Journal of Marketing Research*. Moreover, he wrote or collaborated on more than 17 books and 160 articles.

I feel privileged to have been Bob's collaborator on this volume.

September 28, 1981

WERNER Z. HIRSCH