

Social Security Works for NORTH CAROLINA



Report prepared by Social Security Works and Strengthen Social Security

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The mission of Social Security Works is to protect and improve the economic status of disadvantaged and at-risk populations, and, in so doing, to promote social justice for current and future generations of children as well as young, middle-aged and older adults. Social Security Works is a project of the Tides Advocacy Fund with generous support from The Atlantic Philanthropies.

www.socialsecurity-works.org



The Strengthen Social Security Campaign is made up of more than 60 national organizations and many state organizations, representing more than 30 million Americans. The Campaign is united around core principles, which include that Social Security benefits should not be cut and, instead, should be increased for those who are most disadvantaged.

www.strengthensocialsecurity.org

The data presented in this report speak volumes about the importance of Social Security to families, communities and state and local economies. We hope the report is useful to you as you work to strengthen Social Security in this 75th anniversary year. Please contact the Social Security Works Communications Director, Alex Lawson, if you have questions about this report: alex.lawson@socialsecurity-works.org.

Nancy Altman and Eric Kingson
Co-Directors, Social Security Works

Social Security Works for North Carolina

Debate rages in Washington about how to reduce our nation's growing federal deficit, and pundits and politicians alike propose cutting Social Security.

It doesn't seem to matter that Social Security has not caused the federal deficit, and the program has a \$2.5 trillion surplus today, which is projected to grow to \$4.2 trillion by 2025.¹ Nor does it seem to matter that the housing equity and retirement savings of many Americans collapsed during the nation's Great Recession. Cutting Social Security's protections – especially for middle-aged and young workers – will undermine Social Security as a financial foundation, and often a financial lifeline.

Social Security is paid for through dedicated taxes contributed by workers and their employers. That is why Social Security is a promise, a bond between generations that belongs to the people who have worked hard all their lives and to their families.

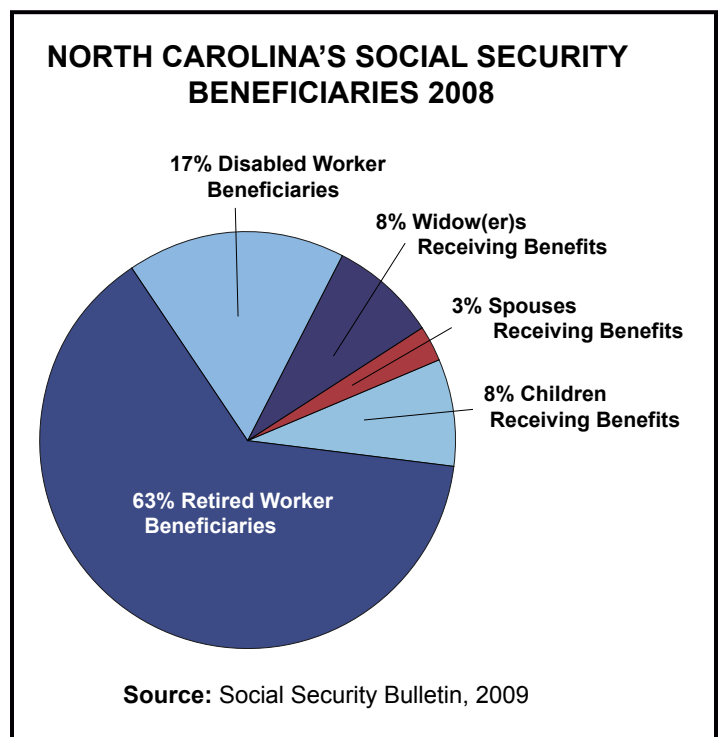
Social Security is family insurance protection against lost wages due to old age, disability, or death. The importance of Social Security's earned protections cannot be overstated:

- 53 million beneficiaries – around one in four households—receive Social Security.²
- 1 out of 3 Social Security beneficiaries is not a senior citizen.³
- Almost two out of three seniors rely on Social Security for half or more of their income.⁴
- The average Social Security benefit is less than \$13,000 a year (\$14,000 for retirees).⁵
- Social Security is the nation's largest disability

program, without which more than half of disabled workers would have incomes below the poverty line.⁶

- Nearly 9 percent of all U.S. children – about 6.5 million – receive Social Security or live in households where all or part of the income of the household comes from Social Security.⁷ Consequently, Social Security is the nation's largest and, despite its modest benefits, most generous children's program.

Clearly Social Security works for the nation and for the residents of every state and congressional district too. Social Security's average benefit is very modest, which is why America cannot afford to cut it. Instead, Congress should work hard to strengthen Social Security.





Social Security Works for North Carolina's Economy

- Social Security provides benefits to nearly 1,631,300 people, more than 1 out of 6 residents (17.7 percent).⁸
- North Carolina residents receive Social Security benefits totaling over \$20.5 billion per year, an amount equivalent to 5 percent of the state's annual GDP (the total value of all goods and services produced).⁹

Social Security Works for North Carolina's Retired Workers

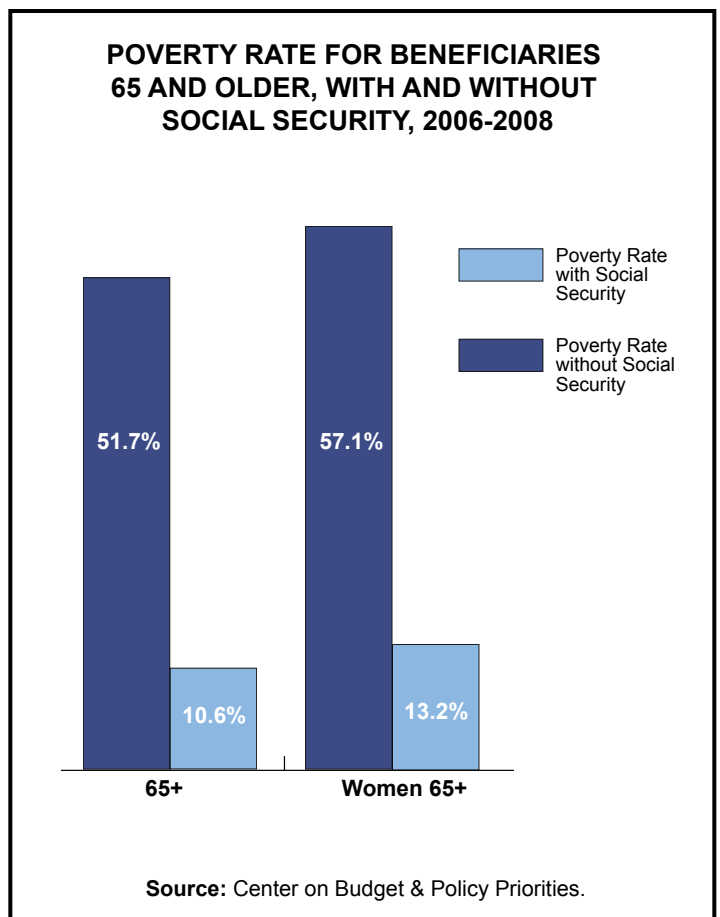
- Social Security provides benefits to about 1,031,800 retired workers, more than 1 out of 10 residents (11.2 percent) and 6 out of 10 beneficiaries (63.3 percent).¹⁰
- The median benefit received by a retired worker in North Carolina is about \$13,500 annually.¹¹
- Social Security lifts out of poverty 461,000 North Carolina residents aged 65 and older. Without Social Security, more than half (51.7 percent) of those residents would have income below the poverty line.¹²

Social Security Works for North Carolina Women

- Social Security provides benefits to about 856,900 residents, more than 1 out of every 6 women (18.2 percent).¹³
- Social Security provides benefits to nearly 54,600 spouses, most of whom are women.¹⁴
- Women make up 58.2 percent of beneficiaries aged 65 and older in North Carolina.¹⁵
- Without Social Security, nearly 6 out of 10 (57.1 percent) North Carolina women aged 65 and older would have income below the poverty line.¹⁶

Social Security Works for North Carolina Workers with Disabilities¹⁷

- Social Security provides disability benefits for nearly 281,500 workers, more than 1 out of 6 (17.3 percent) of all beneficiaries.¹⁸
- The median benefit received by a disabled worker in North Carolina is about \$11,900 annually.¹⁹



Social Security Works for North Carolina Widow(er)s

- Social Security provides survivors' benefits to nearly 127,300 North Carolina widow(er)s, 7.8 percent of all beneficiaries.²⁰
- The median benefit received by a widow(er) in North Carolina is about \$12,800 annually.²¹

Social Security Works for People of Color in North Carolina

- In North Carolina, nearly 1 out of 6 (15.8 percent) African American residents, and more than 1 out of 4 (27.8 percent) residents who are described as "some other race," receive Social Security benefits, or 308,000 and 96,000 people, respectively.²²
- Nationwide, Social Security provides nearly three-quarters (72.4 percent) of the income of African American elderly households, on average. Social Security is 100 percent of the total income for 4 out of 10 (39.5 percent) African American households with beneficiaries aged 65 and older, on average. Social Security provides three-quarters (75.4 percent) of the total income of Hispanic elderly households, on average. Social Security is 100 percent of the income for more than 4 out of 10 (44.2 percent) Hispanic households with beneficiaries aged 65 and older, on average.²³
- Nationwide, 3 out of 10 (30.1 percent) of all nonwhite beneficiaries, including African Americans and residents who are described as "some other race," receive disability benefits; for white beneficiaries it was about half of that number (15.2 percent).²⁴

Social Security Works for North Carolina Children²⁵

- Social Security is the major life and disability insurance protection for more than 95 percent of North Carolina's 2,240,131 children.²⁶
- Social Security provides benefits to more than 136,100 children, 8.3 percent of all beneficiaries.²⁷
- Social Security is the most important source of

income for the more than 288,800 children living in North Carolina's grandfamilies, which are households headed by a grandparent or other relative.²⁸

Social Security Works for North Carolina's Working Families

- Through their hard work and payroll tax contributions, nearly all North Carolina workers earn Social Security's retirement, disability and survivorship protections for themselves and their families.
- Social Security is the most valuable disability and life insurance protection for most North Carolina workers. Nationwide, an estimated 3 out of 10 working-aged men and 1 out of 4 working-aged women will become severely disabled before reaching retirement age. An estimated 1 out of 11 working-aged men and 1 out of 17 working-aged women will die before reaching retirement age.²⁹
- A 30-year-old worker who earns about \$30,000 and who has a spouse and two young children, receives Social Security insurance protection equivalent to private disability and life insurance policies worth \$465,000 and \$476,000, respectively.³⁰



Social Security Works for North Carolina's Congressional Districts

| CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | State Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Total annual benefits (\$ in millions)* | \$20,466M | \$1,530M | \$1,329M | \$1,505M | \$1,276M | \$1,758M | \$1,835M |
| Overall Population | 9,222,414 | 604,794 | 712,841 | 686,863 | 766,214 | 667,179 | 687,870 |
| Residents receiving Social Security benefits | 1,631,266 | 136,668 | 112,457 | 123,430 | 92,043 | 138,855 | 137,939 |
| Percentage of residents receiving Social Security benefits | 17.7% | 22.6% | 15.8% | 18.0% | 12.0% | 20.8% | 20.1% |
| Social Security beneficiaries | | | | | | | |
| <i>Women beneficiaries</i> | 856,926 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| <i>Retired worker beneficiaries</i> | 1,031,806 | 76,740 | 65,866 | 78,026 | 62,017 | 92,030 | 95,398 |
| <i>Disabled worker beneficiaries</i> | 281,498 | 29,109 | 22,998 | 19,752 | 12,658 | 21,498 | 19,310 |
| <i>Widow(er)s receiving benefits</i> | 127,252 | 12,595 | 9,083 | 10,377 | 6,687 | 10,616 | 9,540 |
| <i>Spouses receiving benefits</i> | 54,593 | 4,391 | 3,280 | 5,069 | 3,354 | 4,830 | 4,563 |
| <i>Children receiving benefits</i> | 136,117 | 13,833 | 11,230 | 10,206 | 7,327 | 9,881 | 9,128 |

Sources and Explanatory Note

"Selected Demographic Characteristics in the United States, 2006-2008: North Carolina," in *American Community Survey*, (Washington: US Census Bureau, December 2008). "North Carolina" in *Congressional Statistics, December 2008*, (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, December 2009).

*The annual benefits for the Congressional districts were calculated by taking the monthly benefits and multiplying by 12. The state annual benefits number is the sum of the congressional district numbers.

Social Security Works for North Carolina's Congressional Districts

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

| | State Total | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Total annual benefits (\$ in millions)* | \$20,466M | \$1,760M | \$1,345M | \$1,524M | \$1,760M | \$2,086M | \$1,328M | \$1,430M |
| Overall Population | 9,222,414 | 697,529 | 672,151 | 810,296 | 669,852 | 667,150 | 676,116 | 717,594 |
| Residents receiving Social Security benefits | 1,631,266 | 144,361 | 110,183 | 109,807 | 139,330 | 167,260 | 107,059 | 111,874 |
| Percentage of residents receiving Social Security benefits | 17.7% | 20.7% | 16.4% | 13.6% | 20.8% | 25.1% | 15.8% | 15.6% |
| Social Security beneficiaries | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Women beneficiaries</i> | 856,926 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| <i>Retired worker beneficiaries</i> | 1,031,806 | 86,234 | 65,408 | 73,902 | 90,322 | 110,829 | 64,826 | 70,208 |
| <i>Disabled worker beneficiaries</i> | 281,498 | 27,830 | 22,186 | 15,253 | 24,558 | 25,402 | 21,068 | 19,876 |
| <i>Widow(er)s receiving benefits</i> | 127,252 | 12,078 | 8,426 | 8,310 | 9,636 | 13,660 | 7,954 | 8,290 |
| <i>Spouses receiving benefits</i> | 54,593 | 5,068 | 3,117 | 3,941 | 3,732 | 7,256 | 2,677 | 3,315 |
| <i>Children receiving benefits</i> | 136,117 | 13,151 | 11,046 | 8,401 | 11,082 | 10,113 | 10,534 | 10,185 |

Sources and Explanatory Note

"Selected Demographic Characteristics in the United States, 2006-2008: North Carolina," in *American Community Survey*, (Washington: US Census Bureau, December 2008). "North Carolina" in *Congressional Statistics, December 2008*, (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, December 2009).

*The annual benefits for the Congressional districts were calculated by taking the monthly benefits and multiplying by 12. The state annual benefits number is the sum of the congressional district numbers.

Endnotes

Note: Data cited below is the most recent available as of July, 2010.

- ¹ Social Security Trustees. "Table IV.A3" and "Table VI.F8" in *The 2009 Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds*, (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, 2010).
- ² "Table 2. Social Security Benefits, June 2010" in *Monthly Statistical Snapshot, June, 2010*, (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, 2010) [hereinafter *Monthly Stat. Snapshot*, 2010]; and Reno, Virginia, "Briefing Paper #287: Building on Social Security's Success," (Washington: Economic Policy Institute, 2007).
- ³ *Monthly Stat. Snapshot*, 2010.
- ⁴ "Fast Facts and Figures About Social Security, 2009," (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, 2010).
- ⁵ *Monthly Stat. Snapshot*, 2010.
- ⁶ Van de Water, Paul N. "Income of Disabled Worker Beneficiaries," (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, 2001).
- ⁷ Lavery, Joni and Virginia P. Reno. "Children's Stake in Social Security, Social Security Brief No. 27," (Washington: National Academy of Social Insurance, 2008).
- ⁸ Number of total beneficiaries from "5.J OASDI Current-Pay Benefits: Geographic Data: Table 5.J2—Number, by state or other area, program and type of benefit, December 2008" in *Annual Statistical Supplement to the Social Security Bulletin, 2009*, (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, Feb. 2010) [hereinafter, *Ann. Stat. Supp.*, 2010]. Percentage of state population from "Table 1: Beneficiaries as a percentage of the total resident population and of the population aged 65 and older, by state, December 2008," in *OASDI Beneficiaries by State and County, 2008*, (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, Feb. 2010).
- ⁹ Total annual benefits calculated by taking the monthly benefits and multiplying by twelve. "Table 5.J4—Total monthly benefits, by state or other area, program, and type of benefit, December 2008 (in thousands of dollars)," *Ibid.* Percentage calculated using state Gross Domestic Product figures from "Economic Slowdown Widespread Among States in 2008: Advance 2008 and Revised 2005-2007 State-by-State GDP Statistics," in *Bureau of Economic Analysis News Release*, (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, June 2, 2009), [hereinafter state Gross Domestic Product figures].
- ¹⁰ Number calculated using data from "Table 5.J2—Number, by state or other area, program and type of benefit, December 2008," in *Ann. Stat. Supp.*, 2010. Percentage calculated using population data from "Selected Demographic Characteristics in the United States, 2008: North Carolina," in *American Community Survey*, (Washington: US Census Bureau, 2009) [hereinafter all percentages of state population use *American Community Survey* data].
- ¹¹ "Table 5.J6—Percentage distribution of monthly benefit for retired workers, by state or other area and monthly benefit, December 2008" in *Ann. Stat. Supp.*, 2010.
- ¹² Sherman, Arloc. "Antipoverty Effects of Social Security by State, 2006-2008," Pre-publication; specially released for Social Security Works, courtesy of Arloc Sherman and Paul Van de Water, (Washington: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, July 2010).
- ¹³ "Table 5.J5.1—Number, by state or other area, race, and sex, December 2008," in *Ann. Stat. Supp.*, 2010.
- ¹⁴ "North Carolina" in *Congressional Statistics, December 2008*, (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, December 2009).
- ¹⁵ "Table 5.J3—Number and total monthly benefits for beneficiaries aged 65 and older, by state or other area and sex, December 2008," in *Ann. Stat. Supp.*, 2010.
- ¹⁶ Sherman, *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ The number of Social Security disability beneficiaries cited here includes only those disabled workers receiving disability benefits. It does not include those disabled workers and "disabled adult children" who are recipients of Retirement and Survivors benefits. Hereinafter, any use of the term "disabled worker" will refer only to those disabled workers receiving disability benefits.
- ¹⁸ "Table 5.J2," *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ "Table 5.J8—Percentage distribution of disabled workers, by state or other area and monthly benefit, December 2008" in *Ann. Stat. Supp.*, 2010.
- ²⁰ "Table 5.J2," *Ibid.*
- ²¹ "Table 5.J9—Percentage distribution of nondisabled widow(er)s, by state or other area and monthly benefit, December 2008," in *Ann. Stat. Supp.*, 2010.
- ²² "5.J OASDI Current Pay Benefits: Geographic Data: Table 5.J5.1—Number, by state or other area, race, and sex, December 2008," in *Ann. Stat. Supp.*, 2010.
- ²³ "Table 9.A3 Percentage distribution of beneficiary units, by race, Hispanic origin, and marital status, 2008," in *Income of the Population 55 or Older, 2008*, (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, 2009).
- ²⁴ "Table 5.A1—Number and average monthly benefit, by type of benefit and race, December 2008," in *Ann. Stat. Supp.*, 2010.
- ²⁵ Unless otherwise specified as children under 18 to the exclusion of all others, the term "children" used in this section is consistent with the Social Security Administration's use of the term to include three groups: "children under age 18;" "students aged 18-19," which refers to children ages 18 and 19 who are matriculated in an institution of secondary education; and "disabled adult children," which refers to those adults who have been disabled since before they reached age 18.

²⁶ The term “children,” as it is used here, refers exclusively to children under age 18. Percentage data from “Survivors Benefits,” (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, 2009).

²⁷ “Table 5.J10—Number of children, by state or other area and type of benefit, December 2008,” in *Ann. Stat. Supp.*, 2010.

²⁸ Generations United. “North Carolina Grandfacts,” (Washington: Generations United, March 2008).

²⁹ Baldwin, Robert and Sharon Chu. “Actuarial Note 2005.6: A Death and Disability Life Table for Insured Workers Born in 1985,” (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, Feb. 2006). The term “retirement age” refers to the statutory “Retirement Age” at which workers become eligible for full retirement benefits for Social Security.

³⁰ Nichols, Orlo R. “The Insurance Value and Potential Survivor and Disability Benefits for an Illustrative Worker.” Memo to Alice Wade, Deputy Chief Actuary. (Baltimore: Social Security Administration, Office of the Chief Actuary, August 2008).