



AMERICAN ACADEMY *of* ACTUARIES

Attn: Letters to the Editor
The New York Times
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To The Editor:

Gary King and Samir Soneji raise several issues in “Social Security: It’s Worse than You Think” (op-ed, Jan. 5) but, on their fundamental point that people are living longer, actuaries have been in the forefront of assessing these changes. The trustees report prepared annually by Social Security actuaries has multiple scenarios, including one with mortality comparable to what the authors propose. With input from actuaries and a technical panel of experts from various professions including demographers, Social Security assumptions are reviewed, debated and updated on a constant basis.

Rather than focusing on underlying assumptions already considered, the president and Congress should in earnest address Social Security’s long-term solvency. The real question is whether program changes can and should be undertaken to reflect Americans living longer and other factors.

Comprehensive reform adopted now can avoid the need for more drastic changes to Social Security later. This should include raising the full retirement age, a demographic solution to a demographic challenge that the Academy has urged since 2008.

Sincerely,

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