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# NEWS RELEASE

**Immediate Release**

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## **Actuaries: Women more dependent on Social Security benefits, but receive less**

**WASHINGTON – 16 July 2007** – Gender-related differences in the American work culture have resulted in lower Social Security benefits for women, the **American Academy of Actuaries Social Insurance Committee** said in a new issue brief, “Women and Social Security.” The actuaries cite differences in wage histories, greater probabilities of outliving a spouse and being single in retirement, and the greater likelihood for women to be temporarily out of the workforce, among the differences that cause their benefits to be smaller even though calculated using gender-neutral rules.

The Academy’s issue brief also determined that women, who on average are more likely to have insufficient income in retirement, are in turn more dependent on Social Security. In fact more than 40 percent of females aged 62 or older rely on Social Security for more than 90 percent of their income, as opposed to 28 percent for males aged 62 or older. Additionally poverty rates for single women aged 65 or older are among the highest of any subgroup in the United States.

“As public policymakers evaluate various options to reform the Social Security system, they should not only address its financial problems, but also consider the importance of Social Security as a retirement income source for women,” the Academy’s Senior Pension Fellow **Ron Gebhardt** said. “Before adopting proposals, each should be carefully studied and modeled to show the impact on families and beneficiaries in a variety of situations.”

According to the issue brief, women also have a longer life expectancy at age 65—20 years—compared to men—17 years. Thus they are more likely to deplete their retirement savings. The brief also discusses how dual-earner couples are often disadvantaged by receiving lower Social Security benefits for the same contribution (or may contribute larger amounts to the program for little-to-no additional benefit) compared to a family with one wage earner because of benefits paid to non-working spouses.

To review an outline of Social Security reform proposals and their impact on women, the Academy's issue brief, "Women and Social Security" is available at [www.actuary.org](http://www.actuary.org). For more information, contact Andrew Simonelli, media relations manager for the American Academy of Actuaries, at 202.785.7872.

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The American Academy of Actuaries is the public information organization for the U.S. actuarial profession. Academy committees, task forces, and work groups regularly prepare testimony and provide information to Congress and senior federal policy makers, comment on proposed federal and state regulations, and work closely with the National Association of Insurance Commissioners and state officials on issues related to insurance, pensions, and other forms of risk financing.