



Privatizing Social Security Would Harm African American Women

Privatizing Social Security would result in lower guaranteed benefits for ALL future retirees, but would disproportionately harm African American women and their families. African American women are particularly vulnerable because gender and racial discrimination continue to pose serious barriers to employment, promotion, and higher earnings.

Women in general are already disadvantaged because they often earn less than men, have shorter work histories due to caregiving responsibilities, are less likely to have pensions, and often live longer than men. African American women and their families have even more to lose. To improve the lives of African American women and their families, we must strengthen Social Security, not whittle it away.

African American women disproportionately rely on Social Security in old age.

- Over 60 percent of African American women, and half of all women, age 65 and older would live below the poverty line without Social Security.
- Social Security provides 90 percent or more of the total income for 74 percent of nonmarried (widowed, divorced, and never married women) African American women age 65 and older – compared to 44 percent of all nonmarried women age 65 and older.

African American women have less money to save in private accounts.

- On average, African American women have lower lifetime earnings (earning 63 cents for every dollar earned by a white man) and have less money to invest in private accounts. Social Security's progressive benefit formula helps alleviate the financial impact of lower lifetime earnings.
- African American women comprise a large segment of the part-time and/or low-wage workforce - jobs that do not offer retirement benefits or pension plans.

Social Security's family benefits are particularly important to African Americans.

- At age 65, the life expectancy difference between African American men and white men is less than two years. However, African American men have a higher mortality rate at *earlier ages*; therefore their families disproportionately benefit from Social Security survivor benefits.
- Social Security is particularly important to African American children, who are almost four times more likely to be lifted out of poverty by Social Security than are white children.

- While African Americans are only 12 percent of the U.S. population, they disproportionately rely on Social Security's family benefits:
 - African American parents represent almost 17 percent of those receiving widowed mothers' and fathers' benefits.
 - African American children disproportionately depend on Social Security's family insurance. They comprise 20 percent of all retired worker child beneficiaries, 23 percent of all child survivor beneficiaries, and 21 percent of all disabled worker child beneficiaries.