



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STUDY SHOWS CALIFORNIA SENIORS RELY HEAVILY ON SOCIAL SECURITY

[Sacramento] - A new report finds that between 2001 and 2003, nearly 1.4 million California individuals and couples aged 65 and over depended on Social Security for at least half of their income. Of that group, more than half (55 percent) relied on Social Security for at least 90 percent of their income. The study, released today by the California Budget Project and the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), contains data for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the nation as a whole.

“Given the degree to which California seniors depend on Social Security, any cuts in benefits will have a significant effect on their standard of living,” said Jean Ross, Executive Director of the California Budget Project.

Co-authored by Michael Ettlinger, Director of the Economic Analysis and Research Network (EARN), and EPI economist Jeff Chapman, the study examines the degree to which senior recipients – grouped by state of residence, race, and gender – depended on Social Security for income between 2001 and 2003.

In California, each of these groups relied heavily on Social Security. Half of the state’s senior Latino recipients depended on Social Security for at least 81 percent of their income. Half of California’s senior black recipients derived at least 66 percent of their income from Social Security, and half of white senior recipients relied on Social Security for at least 60 percent of their income.

Women, in particular, relied on Social Security. In the period studied, half of the state’s nonmarried senior female recipients received at least 81 percent of their income from Social Security. Half of California’s nonmarried senior male recipients received at least 72 percent of their income from Social Security, and half of senior married couples relied on Social Security for at least 48 percent of their income.

Nationally, half of senior recipients relied on Social Security for at least two-thirds (67 percent) of their income. One-third (33 percent) depended on Social Security for at least 90 percent of their income.

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The California Budget Project (CBP) was founded in 1994 to provide Californians with a source of timely, objective, and accessible expertise on state fiscal and economic policy issues. The CBP engages in independent fiscal and policy analysis and public education with the goal of improving public policies affecting the economic and social well-being of low- and middle-income Californians. Support for the CBP comes from foundation grants, publications, and individual contributions.

A CBP fact sheet on Social Security is available at www.cbp.org. The Economic Policy Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank that seeks to broaden the public debate about strategies to achieve a prosperous and fair economy. The EPI report, *Social Security and the Income of the Elderly*, is available at <http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/ib206>.