

Study Finds Residents in Over Half of the Largest U.S. Counties Not Prepared for Retirement Thursday July 13 WASHINGTON, July 13 /PRNewswire/ -- An economic study released today by Americans for Secure Retirement (ASR) reveals that residents in over 50 percent of the largest counties in the United States are not prepared for retirement. These Americans, in 132 of the 250 largest counties across the country, face a high risk of not having enough income in retirement to allow them to maintain their standard of living. The study, entitled "The Retirement Readiness Assessment: Are You Prepared?" assesses the retirement risk of the 250 largest U.S. counties in an effort to bring attention to the lack of preparedness across the country and the need for public policy solutions to address pervasive retirement insecurity in America.

"The high level of retirement risk seen across more than 50 percent of the largest counties in the country is striking," said Dr. William Orzechowski, President of the economic consulting firm Orzechowski & Walker that conducted the study. "These results are due to a combination of factors such as lack of access to pensions, low income, and lack of assets that can be converted into income, which makes it difficult for individuals in these regions to extend their resources over the increasingly long span of retirement years."

The study examines thirty economic and demographic variables for the 250 counties -- including cost of living, home ownership data, access to pension funds and household income -- each of which makes a county have higher or lower retirement risk. The combination of these variables allows each county to be categorized on a relative scale according to their retirement preparedness ranging from "Very High Retirement Risk" to "Nominal Retirement Risk."

The six counties where the need for reliable, lifelong retirement income is most urgent are all in Florida: Lee, Marion, Pasco, Polk, Sarasota and Volusia. These six Florida counties are those that fall into the "Very High Retirement Risk" category. Thirty-two more counties fall into the next category of "High Retirement Risk" and ninety-four more in the "Elevated Retirement Risk" category, which amounts to over 50 percent of the largest counties in the U.S. in these top three risk categories. (See a full list of these counties at the end of this release.)

"This study should serve as a wake up call, bringing long overdue attention to the fact that Americans need help in making their retirement savings last a lifetime," said Shannon Hunt, Executive Director of Americans for Secure Retirement. "Policy makers should use the findings of this study to galvanize support around responsible retirement policies that can help secure Americans guaranteed lifelong retirement income."

The challenges facing policymakers are formidable; not only is it essential to encourage people to save more for retirement, but it is equally critical to promote planning so savings last a lifetime. Consider the fact that 88 million American workers either do not have access to, or participate in, any sort of employer-sponsored retirement plan. To put this in perspective, that is twice the number of people without health insurance in the United States and over half of the entire American workforce. And meanwhile, Social Security today on average replaces only about 42 percent of pre-retirement income. For those who retire before age 65 -- which is 75% of retirees today -- Social Security replaces even less -- only around 32% of their pre-retirement income. And these are just averages -- individual circumstances could mean you have less. The result -- there is a hefty gap that individuals must be prepared to make up with their own personal retirement savings in order to maintain their standard of living in retirement.

Hunt added that one way to help Americans have a more secure retirement is for policymakers to encourage greater use of retirement vehicles that guarantee income for life, such as lifetime annuities. "The steady, lifelong stream of income provided by annuities offers seniors the security in old age that this study shows they are lacking," she concluded.

The Retirement Readiness Assessment was commissioned by Americans for Secure Retirement (ASR), a coalition representing a broad cross section of interests including women's groups, minority groups, rural organizations, and small business groups, among others. ASR advocates for policies that would help Americans better manage their savings so that they last a lifetime and secure retirement. Legislation introduced in Congress last year, such as The Retirement Security for Life Act (H.R. 819, S. 381), would help alleviate the vulnerability cited in this report by encouraging Americans to use lifetime annuities as a way to secure a steady stream of income throughout retirement. Under these proposals, individuals would not pay federal taxes on a portion of the income generated by lifetime annuities. For example, H.R. 819 would allow a 50 percent tax exclusion on the payout of a lifetime annuity up to a maximum of \$20,000 per year. For a typical American in the 25 percent tax bracket, this would provide an annual tax savings of up to \$5,000.

To view the complete study, including specific data for each of the 250 largest U.S. counties the report examined, please visit:
<http://www.paycheckforlife.org>.

Listed below are the large U.S. counties in which residents face an acute challenge in preparing for retirement. (This list consists of 52% of the largest 250 counties in the United States.)

Very High Retirement Risk

Lee, FL Marion, FL Pasco, FL Polk, FL Sarasota, FL Volusia, FL

High Retirement Risk

Baltimore City, MD Bernalillo, NM Brevard, FL Bronx, NY
Caddo Parish, LA Cameron, TX Collier, FL El Paso, TX
Escambia, FL Fresno, CA Greene, MO Hidalgo, TX Kern, CA
Knox, TN Lane, OR Lubbock, TX Luzerne, PA Mahoning, OH
Manatee, FL Marion, OR Miami-Dade, FL Mobile, AL Oklahoma, OK
Oneida, NY Orleans Parish, LA Philadelphia, PA Pinellas, FL
Spokane, WA Stark, OH St. Louis City, MO Tulare, CA
Westmoreland, PA

Elevated Retirement Risk

Albany, NY Allegheny, PA Allen, IN Atlantic, NJ Bell, TX
Berks, PA Bexar, TX Bristol, MA Broward, FL Camden, NJ
Catham, GA Charleston, SC Clackamas, OR Clark, NV Clark, WA
Cook, IL Cumberland, NC Cuyahoga, OH Dauphin, PA Davidson,
TN Delaware, PA Denver, CO Duval, FL East Baton Rouge Parish,
LA Erie, NY Erie, PA Forsyth, NC Genesee, MI Greenville, SC
Guilford, NC Hamilton, OH Hamilton, TN Hampden, MA
Hartford, CT Hillsborough, FL Hinds, MS Honolulu, HI Hudson,
NJ Jackson, MO Jefferson, AL Jefferson, KY Jefferson, TX
Jefferson Parish, LA Kalamazoo, MI Kings, NY Lake, IN
Lancaster, PA Lehigh, PA Lorain, OH Los Angeles, CA Lucas, OH
Madison, AL Madison, IL Maricopa, AZ Marion, IN Milwaukee, WI
Monroe, NY Monterey, CA Montgomery, OH Multnomah, OR New
Haven, CT New York, NY Norfolk City, VA Northampton, PA
Nueces, TX Ocean, NJ Onondaga, NY Orange, FL Palm Beach, FL
Pierce, WA Pima, AZ Providence, RI Pulaski, AK Queens, NY
Riverside, CA Sacramento, CA San Bernardino, CA San Diego, CA
San Joaquin, CA San Luis Obispo, CA Santa Barbara, CA Sedgwick,
KS Shelby, TN Spartanburg, SC St. Clair, IL St. Joseph, IN
St. Louis, MO Stanislaus, OH Tulsa, OK Washoe, NV Wayne, MM
Winnebago, IL

***The following list is the additional 118 counties of the 250 largest counties in the country that face "Moderate," "Less" or "Nominal" Retirement Risk.

Moderate Retirement Risk

Ada, ID Adams, CO Alameda, CA Baltimore, MD Bergen, NJ
Brazoria, TX Bucks, PA Burlington, NJ Butler, OH Clayton, GA
Contra Costa, CA Cumberland, MN Dallas, TX Dane, WI Davis,
UT De Kalb, GA Douglas, NE Dutchess, NY El Paso, CO Essex,
MA Essex, NJ Fairfield, CN Fayette, KY Franklin, OH Fulton,
GA Galveston, TX Gloucester, NJ Harris, TX Hennepin, MN
Henrico, VA Ingham, MI Kent, MI Kina, WA Kitsap, WA
Lake, OH Lancaster, NE Larimer, CO Leon, FL Macomb, MI
Marin, CA Mecklenburg, NC Mercer, NJ Middlesex, MA
Montgomery, PA Montgomery, TX Nassau, NY New Castle, DE New
London, CN Norfolk, MA Oakland, MI Orange, CA Orange, NY
Ottawa, MI Passaic, NJ Placer, CA Plymouth, MA Polk, IO
Prince George, MA Ramsey, MN Richland, SC Richmond, NY Salk
Lake, UT San Francisco, CA Santa Cruz, CA Seminole, FL
Snohomish, WA Solano, CA Sonoma, CA St. Charles, MO
Suffolk, MA Suffolk, NY Tarrant, TX Union, NJ Utah, UT
Venture, CA Washington, DC Washington, OR Westchester, NY
Worcester, MA

Less Retirement Risk

Anchorage, AL Anne Arundel, MD Anoka, MN Boulder, CO
Chester, PA Chesterfield, VA Cobb, GA Dakota, MN Denton, TX
DuPage, IL Fort Bend, TX Gwinnett, GA Hillsborough, NH Howard,
MD Jefferson, CO Johnson, KS Kane, IL McHenry, IL Monmouth,
NJ Montgomery, MD Morris, NJ Rockingham, NH Rockland, NY
San Mateo, CA Santa Clara, CA Travis, TX Virginia Beach, VA
Wake, NC Washtenaw, MI Will, IL Williamson, TX

Nominal Retirement Risk

Collin, TX Fairfax, VA Lake, IL Prince Williams, VA
Somerset, NJ