



# SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

[www.siena.edu/sri](http://www.siena.edu/sri)

For Immediate Release:

Monday, April 18, 2011

Contact:

Dr. Don Levy, 518-783-2901 or [dlevy@siena.edu](mailto:dlevy@siena.edu)

PDF version; crosstabs; website:

[www.Siena.edu/SRI/research](http://www.Siena.edu/SRI/research)

Special New York State Financial Planning Survey

## **On Tax Day: 42% Say Paid Too Much in Taxes, 52% Get Refund; Most Use it to Pay Bills**

***Two-Thirds Agree, Social Security Could be Bankrupt in 2035  
Less than 50% Actively Saving for Retirement; Only 20% Say Income  
Greater than Expenses Last Year***

***Retirees Count on Social Security, Fear Younger Generation will have  
Worse Quality of Life in Golden Years***

**Loudonville, NY.** On the day that income taxes are due, 42 percent of New York residents say they paid too much in taxes this year while 43 percent believe they paid the right amount, according to a new poll released today by the Siena College Research Institute. Fifty-two percent have either already or expect to receive a tax refund. Of those, 64 percent plan to use the refund to pay bills, 33 percent will hold some of it for emergencies and 21 percent will put a portion of the refund away for their retirement. Sixty-five percent of residents agree that unless something is done, Social Security will be bankrupt within the next 20 to 25 years.

Among those New Yorkers that have not yet retired, only 41 percent have over the last six months contributed money to their retirement fund above any contributions their employer may have made. Forty-three percent say they made no contribution and 9 percent withdrew from their retirement. Among all New Yorkers, only 21 percent say they are better off financially today than they were a year ago and 31 percent have spent more money than they took in while 48 percent say that their income and expenses were about even this year.

Fifty-nine percent of current retirees say that Social Security is a major source of their income ranking it above pensions (42%), savings (19%) and 401k's (8%). Those not yet retired list Social Security as their third major source of planned retirement income with 401k's ranking first and savings second.

“One thing that young and old do agree on is that the retirement prospects are on the decline. Among those not currently retired, forty-five percent believe their quality of life in retirement will be worse than those that retired already and among those currently retired, sixty-three percent predict that people in their thirties or forties today will have a worse retirement quality of life than they now enjoy,” according to Dr. Don Levy, SRI's Director.

“We asked New Yorkers to tell us how they were preparing for retirement. Only forty-five percent have a written monthly budget that they use to keep track of income and expenses. A majority does have at least \$1000 in savings but only forty-three percent have socked away six months of expenses. More than half have life insurance and fifty-four percent have a 401K but fewer than forty percent of New Yorkers have a will, a portfolio of individual stocks, or a financial advisor,” noted Levy.

While two-thirds believe Social Security must be fixed to survive, and both retirees and those not yet retired count on those payments, New Yorkers are divided on what should be done. Fifty-four percent favor lessening benefits for those that retire with significant wealth while 36 percent disagree. On three other suggestions, partial privatization, increasing the payroll deduction rate and increasing the payroll cap from \$106,800 to 90 percent of taxable income, residents are evenly divided. New Yorkers strongly oppose, 67 to 28 percent, raising the age at which citizens can collect from Social Security to 70 years of age.

“With so many New Yorkers continuing to feel the pinch of a difficult economy, it’s no wonder so many have concerns about their ability to retire. Among those that have not yet retired over half say it is a significant concern for them to be able to save enough to retire, and most worry about how much it will cost them to live when they do. Fifty-nine percent are worried about saving enough and fifty-one percent are concerned whether Social Security will or won’t be there when it is their turn,” Levy said.

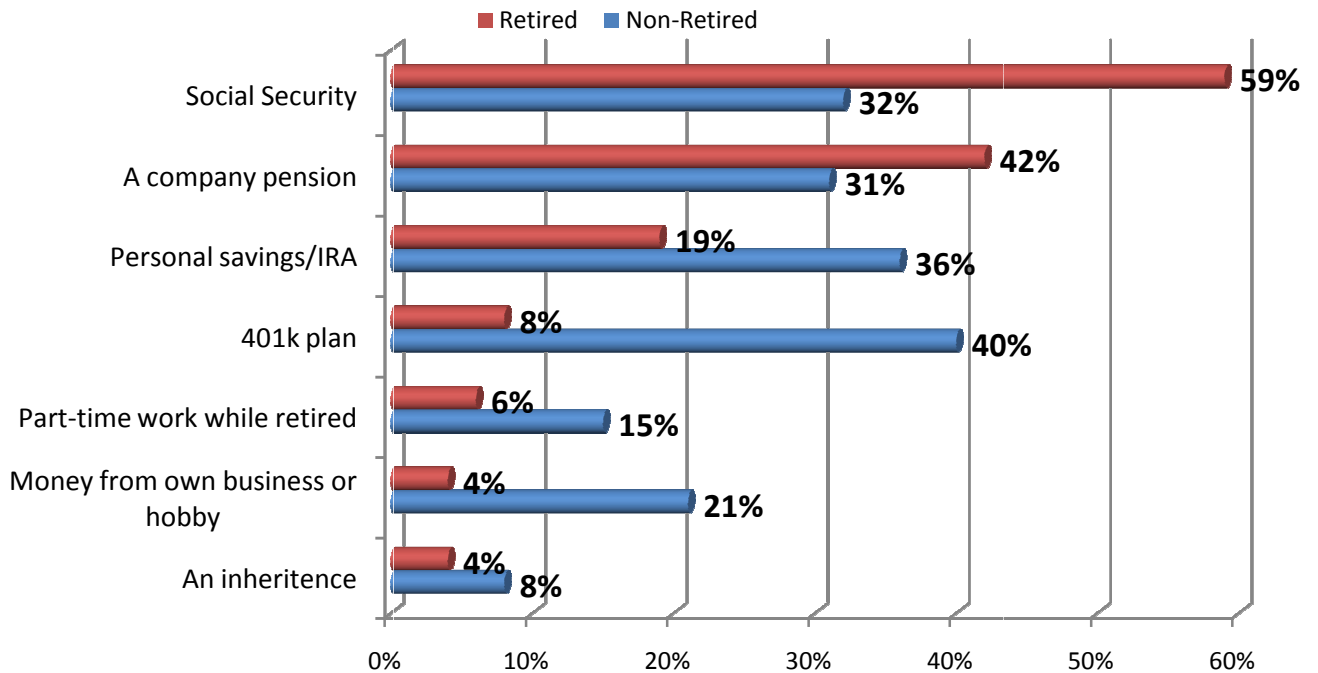
“About two-thirds of those already retired, are significantly concerned about the cost of health care, the general cost of living and continuing to receive Social Security benefits. Forty-four percent of retirees say that their quality of life has worsened in retirement, but sixty-two percent are at least somewhat confident that they will be able to maintain their standard of living at the same level throughout their retirement,” Levy notes.

Over the past two years, among those not yet retired, 50 percent put money in a savings account, 47 percent put money in a 401k, 23 percent met with a financial advisor, 13 percent invested in real estate, and 10 percent started a business. Nine percent volunteered that they haven’t done anything in the last two years to save for retirement. Still, 23 percent are very confident and 46 percent are somewhat confident that upon retirement they will be able to continue to enjoy the same standard of living. In retirement, 60 percent hope to travel, and 52 percent plan to just relax.

“There are plenty of hopes and dreams for retirement, but right now New Yorkers are worried about Social Security continuing to be there and whether in these tough times they can squirrel away enough acorns of their own. Right now, more believe future retirements won’t match the life enjoyed by current retirees than those that see easy street around the corner,” Levy said.

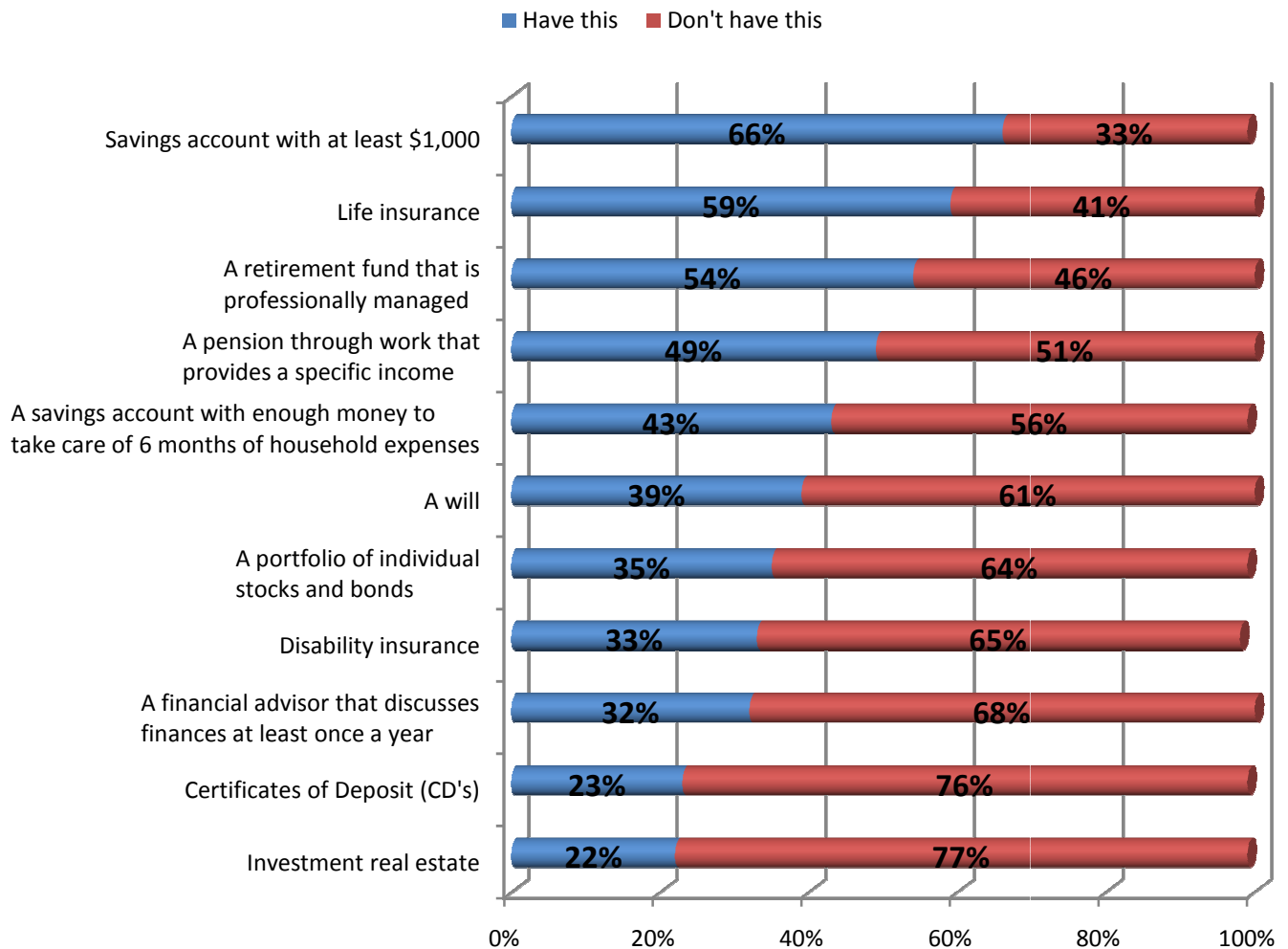
**The SRI special survey of Financial Planning was conducted March 28-31 and April 4-7, 10, 2011 by random telephone calls to 811 residents of New York State over the age of 18 (511 not retired, 300 retired) via both landline and cell phones. Data was statistically adjusted by age, region and gender to ensure representativeness. SRI reports this data at a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of  $\pm 3.5$  points for the overall sample,  $\pm 4.3$  for not retired and  $\pm 5.7$  for retirees. Sampling was conducted via random digit dialing weighted to reflect known population patterns. SRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information or comments, please call Dr. Don Levy, Director Siena College Research Institute, at 518-783-2901. Survey cross-tabulations and frequencies can be found at [www.siena.edu/sri/research](http://www.siena.edu/sri/research)**

## Major Source of Retirement Income



Source: Siena College Poll, April 18, 2011

## Modes of Saving For Future



Source: Siena College Poll, April 18, 2011