



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Sleeping through a social insurance revolution: A call for action

by Bob Katz

In one of his famous speeches in the '60s, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. claimed that those people who were not recognizing the civil rights movement were "sleeping through a revolution." Is our actuarial profession similarly sleeping through a social insurance and social security revolution?

In September 1994, the World Bank issued its landmark policy research report, "Averting the Old Age Crisis: Policies to Protect the Old and Promote Growth." In the foreword to that report, the Bank's vice president of development economics/chief economist wrote, "...Many economists and policymakers are seeking information and advice about old age security arrangements. But there are still too few who are aware of the impact these arrangements have on such diverse concerns as poverty, employment, inflation, and growth."

Is our profession seeking or providing information and advice? Are we part of the aware few or the uninformed many?

The Report of the Secretary General of the International Social Security Association on the 25th General Assembly, "Developments and Trends

in Social Security, 1993-1995," contains the following significant quote: "...The major developments can be summarized under a single heading: the realization and conviction of social security managers and decision-makers throughout the world that change is both inevitable and necessary." Has our profession been a part of that process of change?

A call to form a new Social Insurance Section

Society of Actuaries President Sam Gutterman believes that social insurance, which includes retirement, survivor, health care, and disability benefits, is an issue of such importance that it would be appropriate to form a special interest Section devoted to it. He has asked me to initiate the process. I told him I would be happy to do so if enough actuaries were willing to devote the time and energy required to form the Section and to make it function in a meaningful way.

At the annual meeting in Orlando, an open forum will address, "Assessing the Old Age Crisis: the Perspective of the Actuary and the Actuarial Profession" (Session 28, 1:30 to 3 p.m., Monday, October 28). We will hear

from several actuaries who are interested and involved in this very critical topic. This session can serve as a launching pad for a more involved actuarial profession.

If you're coming to Orlando, and social insurance or Social Security is on your mind, please plan on joining in the effort. A flyer on the Section will be placed in your registration packet. A table will be set up at the continental breakfasts for you to express interest and to meet some of the "players" forming this Section. I look forward to seeing you there.

You don't have to wait for Orlando, however, to express interest in contributing to this Social Insurance Section's formation and continuing operation. You can be part of this important development by calling Lois Chinnock at the SOA office (847/706-3524; fax: 847/706-3599). **Robert M. Katz is senior actuary at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., and a member of the International Section Council. He can be reached by e-mail at rkatz@worldbank.org.**

U. of Iowa seeks faculty member

Applications are invited for a tenure track faculty position in actuarial science in the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science at the University of Iowa (<http://www.stat.uiowa.edu>). Assistant professor level is planned, but an exceptional candidate will be considered regardless of rank.

Specialities in life or casualty are welcome. Applicants must be committed to excellence in teaching and creative research. They should have earned (or be close to completing) both a Ph.D. degree and either an Associateship or Fellowship in a professional actuarial society. The selection begins on December 2,

1996, and continues until the position is filled. Send a curriculum vitae and three letters of reference to Professor James D. Broffitt, Actuarial Search Committee, Dept. of Statistics and Actuarial Science, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242. E-mail: broffitt@stat.uiowa.edu.