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NEW POLL SHOWS DEEP ECONOMIC ANXIETY AMONG SENIORS

Almost half of seniors worry they will not have enough money during retirement years

Washington, DC – December 9, 2010 – Almost 85 percent of senior citizens and their adult children are deeply pessimistic about the state of the economy and nearly 50 percent of senior citizens worry they will not have enough money to support themselves in retirement, according to the results of a new study, “The Retirement Abyss: America's Seniors' Search for Security” released today. The new data underscores the depth of the economic recession and its impact on older Americans. One-in-four seniors believe they will not be able to cover their monthly expenses, such as housing and utilities, and nearly 20 percent believe that, without additional cash flow, they will have to give up their homes. The poll, conducted by Marttila Strategies on behalf of the National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association, surveyed 1,800 seniors and their adult children, nationwide, between October 16th and 30th. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 4 percent.

“This survey confirms that seniors are experiencing significant anxiety about the economy, funding their retirement, and their ability to meet even the most basic needs,” said John Marttila of Marttila Strategies who conducted the research. “This includes remaining in their homes and keeping up with living expenses.”

The vast majority of respondents (more than 80 percent) expressed a preference to stay in their own homes throughout their retirement years. In addition, given their concerns about the ability to afford monthly expenses, both seniors and adult children with aging parents agreed that given the current economic climate, the wisest financial strategy is to use income and assets to cover living costs rather than leave an inheritance for the next generation.

“Without increased social security benefits, retirement funding will need to come from seniors’ own personal resources,” said Peter Bell, president of the National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association (NRMLA). “In light of reduced stock and bond portfolios, seniors will have to consider other asset pools, including the use of home equity, to help fill this financial shortfall.”

The poll also measured overall satisfaction levels with reverse mortgages; 74 percent of those reverse mortgage borrowers surveyed described their reverse mortgage experience as positive choosing a rating of 7, 8, 9, or 10 out of 10 point scale with 10 signifying complete satisfaction. The survey revealed that seniors with reverse mortgages fully grasped the financial terms associated with the product, with 75 percent saying they understood the financial terms well or very well. Finally, 90

percent of all seniors who selected a reverse mortgage as a retirement security solution felt no sales pressure, and the same proportion indicated they were more than adequately informed about this financial product.

Reverse mortgages are available to seniors 62 years-old and older with significant home equity. They are designed to enable elderly homeowners to borrow against the equity in their homes without having to make monthly payments as is required with a traditional "forward" mortgage or home equity loan. Under a reverse mortgage, funds are advanced to the borrower and interest accrues, but the outstanding balance is not due until the last borrower leaves the home, sells or passes away. Borrowers may draw down funds as a lump sum at loan origination, establish a line of credit or request fixed monthly payments for as long as they continue to live in the home.

“This research validates that seniors with reverse mortgages are pleased with their loans and with the experience of obtaining them,” Bell said. “Clearly, reverse mortgages are an effective tool to enhance borrower retirement security and quality of life.”

About the “The Retirement Abyss: America's Seniors' Search for Security”:

Marttila Strategies conducted three national telephone surveys between October 16 and October 30, 2010 on behalf of the National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association. Each survey was answered by at least 600 respondents. Survey results have a margin of error of +/- 4 percent.

- Only those seniors who have held a reverse mortgage for a minimum of two years were interviewed for the survey which included questions on this topic
- The survey WITHOUT reverse mortgage questions included those seniors who own their homes and whose mortgage loan balance is no more than 50 percent of their home equity.
- The survey of adults, included only those individuals 45 years and older with at least one surviving parent. Respondents indicated that their parents own their own homes and that the mortgage loan balances on those homes is no more than 50 percent of their home equity.

About the National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association:

The National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association (NRMLA) is a membership organization comprised of over 300 companies and more than 1,000 people participating in the reverse mortgage industry. NRMLA serves as the national voice for the reverse mortgage industry. It serves as an educational resource, policy advocate and public affairs center for lenders and related professionals. NRMLA was established in 1997 to enhance the professionalism of the reverse mortgage business.

About Marttila Strategies:

Marttila Strategies specializes in strategic planning and opinion research that focus on public issues. The company has provided these services for a broad range of domestic and international clients, including: private corporations, non-profit groups, business and trade associations, political candidates and political organizations. Marttila Strategies has conducted in-depth national surveys on a range of topics, including four polls on health care reform/policy, public reaction to the Medicare prescription program for seniors, religion in the public square, the war in Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Supreme Court, anti-Semitism and immigration. John Marttila has been a close personal advisor to Vice President Joe Biden throughout the Vice President's entire career, including during his most recent presidential campaign.

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