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**Date:** 10/14/2015 3:18:00 PM  
**Subject:** A story of two women

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The next time you hear someone talk about how America's retirees are doing just fine, raking in the Social Security benefits and planning their vacations (usually followed by a proposal to raise the retirement age or somehow slash Social Security benefits) and you think, "This person isn't talking about the older people I know," you might want to pass on [this New York Times article](#).

[New Old Age column](#) writer Paula Span uses the stories of two women to show the stark differences in financial health and longevity based on differences in opportunity. Not surprisingly, to anyone connected with Justice in Aging, the 67-year old woman who had to leave college to raise a family, went through a divorce, lost a business during the recession, and suffers from poor health is struggling more than the 81-year old who finished college, was married to a high earning spouse, and inherited money.

The inequality in longevity alone is striking and is widening. Upper income women born in the 1960s live an average of 13 years longer than lower income women born at the same time. That longevity gap is only 4 years for women born in the 1930s.

The studies on which this article was based directly contradict the narrative we usually hear in the media about prosperous retirees, and I hope you'll share this article widely. It's a fact that lack of opportunity and earning power follow people into old age---and that's why we must continue to fight any efforts to cut social safety net programs, and also work harder to expand them for the growing number of Americans aging into poverty.

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