



SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## PRESS RELEASE

### Re: Eligibility Criteria for Survivor's and Death Benefits were amended to be more equitable.

**Belize City, Belize, March 4, 2024:**

The Cabinet has indicated in its Cabinet Brief of Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2024, its approval to amend regulations 32 and 54 of the Social Security (Benefit) regulations as proposed by the Social Security Board. These amendments seek to address spousal entitlement to survivor's benefits and death benefits under the Social Security Scheme such that widows and widowers' eligibility for the benefits will be treated equally.

It is important to clarify an irresponsible and misleading headline by a news outlet. Under the Social Security Substantive Act, Part III - Benefits Section 14 (2) (ii, iii) concerning rates and conditions for benefits remain unchanged. The registered beneficiary for the insured woman has to be a man she lives with as his wife, and for the insured man, a woman with whom he lives with as her husband.

Under regulation 31 of the Benefits Regulations (Survivors Benefit), there are four situations where a woman may be entitled to a widow's pension. In contrast, under regulation 32 of the Benefit Regulations, there is only one situation where a man can be entitled to a widower's pension.

Similarly, under regulations 53 and 54 (Death Benefit), there are four situations where a woman may be entitled to a widow's death benefit, while under regulation 54 of the Benefit Regulations, there is only one situation where a man can be entitled to a widower's death benefit.

The proposed amendments will address the potentially discriminatory nature of the eligibility criteria for Survivors Benefits and Death Benefits for widowers.

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