H. R. 5292

To amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to limit the availability of benefits under an employer's nonqualified deferred compensation plans in the event that any of the employer's defined pension plans are subjected to a distress or PBGC termination in connection with bankruptcy reorganization or a conversion to a cash balance plan.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 8, 2004

Mr. George Miller of California (for himself, Mr. Hoeffel, Mr. Payne, Mr. Grijalva, Mr. Owens, Mrs. McCarthy of New York, Mr. Doggett, Mr. Bishop of New York, Mr. Davis of Illinois, Mr. Van Hollen, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Kucinich, and Mr. Tierney) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to limit the availability of benefits under an employer's nonqualified deferred compensation plans in the event that any of the employer's defined pension plans are subjected to a distress or PBGC termination in connection with bankruptcy reorganization or a conversion to a cash balance plan.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, 3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE. This Act may be cited as the "Pension Fairness Act 4 of 2004". SEC. 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE. 7 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds as follows: 8 (1) The pension system sponsored by private 9 employers is in a weakened state due to economic re-10 cession and heightened global competition. 11 (2) Employers increasingly are terminating or 12 reducing the benefits provided under traditional de-13 fined benefit pension plans. (3) Over 44,000,000 workers, retirees, and 14 15 their families depend on defined benefit pension 16 plans as a critical component of their retirement se-17 curity in addition to Social Security. 18 (4) Defined benefit pension plans are currently 19 estimated to be underfunded up to a total of 20 \$400,000,000,000, and the Pension Benefit Guar-21 anty Corporation, the agency that insures traditional 22 pensions, had 2003 deficit of a over 23 \$10,000,000,000. 24 (5) The Congress in enacting the Employee Re-

tirement Income Security Act of 1974 intended em-

- ployers to adequately fund their pension plans and did not intend for the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation to be used as a means for restructuring companies to escape their unfunded pension liabilities.
 - (6) Cash balance pension plans were created to reduce traditional defined benefit pension obligations without statutory authorization, and adequate standards do not exist to adequately protect the pensions of pension plan participants, particularly older participants.
 - (7) Corporate executives often preserve or enhance executive pension and other employee benefits at the same time the benefits of non-highly paid employees are reduced.
- 16 (b) Purpose.—It is the purpose of this Act to better protect the retirement benefits afforded to workers and 17 18 retirees by protecting the solvency of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation and ensuring equitable treatment 19 20 of corporate executives as compared to treatment provided 21 to other employees when restructuring employers shift un-22 funded pension liabilities onto the Pension Benefit Guar-23 anty Corporation or convert to cash balance pension plans without adequately protecting the retirement security of older workers. 25

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

1	SEC. 2. TERMINATION FAIRNESS STANDARD FOR NON-
2	QUALIFIED DEFERRED COMPENSATION
3	PLANS IN CONNECTION WITH A PENSION
4	PLAN TERMINATION BASED ON BANKRUPTCY
5	REORGANIZATION OR IN CONNECTION WITH
6	A CONVERSION OF A PLAN TO A CASH BAL-
7	ANCE PLAN.
8	Section 206 of the Employee Retirement Income Se-
9	curity Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1056) is amended by adding
10	at the end the following new subsection:
11	"(g) Termination Fairness Standard for Non-
12	QUALIFIED DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLANS IN CON-
13	NECTION WITH A PENSION PLAN TERMINATION BASED
14	ON BANKRUPTCY REORGANIZATION OR IN CONNECTION
15	WITH A CONVERSION OF A PENSION PLAN TO A CASH
16	Balance Plan.—
17	"(1) In general.—In any case in which a cor-
18	poration is a plan sponsor of a defined benefit plan
19	with respect to which a plan amendment is adopted
20	that has the effect of—
21	"(A) implementing a distress termination
22	of the plan under section 4041(c) based on
23	bankruptcy reorganization or a termination of
24	the plan initiated by the Pension Benefit Guar-
25	anty Corporation under section 4042 based on
26	bankruptcy reorganization, in any case in which

1	the plan is not sufficient for guaranteed bene-
2	fits (within the meaning of section 4041(d)(2))
3	as of the proposed termination date, or
4	"(B) converting such plan to a cash bal-
5	ance plan, in any case in which the amend-
6	ment—
7	"(i) results in a significant reduction
8	in the rate of future benefit accruals (with-
9	in the meaning of section $204(h)(1)$) of
10	participants with at least 10 years of serv-
11	ice under the plan, or
12	"(ii) does not provide for an election
13	by affected participants with at least 10
14	years of service under the plan (and their
15	beneficiaries) to retain coverage under the
16	terms of the plan as in effect immediately
17	prior to the amendment,
18	any covered deferred compensation plan established
19	or maintained by such plan sponsor after the date
20	of the adoption of such plan amendment shall meet
21	the termination fairness standard of this subsection
22	with respect to such plan amendment.
23	"(2) Termination fairness standard.—A
24	covered deferred compensation plan established or
25	maintained by a plan sponsor described in para-

1	graph (1) meets the termination fairness standard of
2	this subsection with respect to a plan amendment
3	described in paragraph (1) if, during the 5-year pe-
4	riod beginning on the date of the adoption of such
5	plan amendment—
6	"(A) no amount of deferred compensation
7	accrues to a disqualified individual under the
8	terms of such covered deferred compensation
9	plan (irrespective of whether the accrual in de-
10	ferred compensation is expressed in the form of
11	a promise, a guarantee, or any other represen-
12	tation), and
13	"(B) in the case of a covered deferred com-
14	pensation plan established during or after the
15	1-year period preceding the notice date (or any
16	amendment to a covered deferred compensation
17	plan if such amendment is adopted during or
18	after such 1-year period), no distribution of ac-
19	crued deferred compensation is made under
20	such plan (or such amendment) to a disquali-
21	fied individual.
22	"(3) Definitions.—For purposes of this sub-
23	section—
24	"(A) CASH BALANCE PLAN.—

1	"(i) IN GENERAL.—The term 'cash
2	balance plan' means a defined benefit plan
3	under which the accrued benefit is ex-
4	pressed to participants and beneficiaries as
5	an amount other than an annual benefit
6	commencing at normal retirement age.
7	"(ii) Regulations to include simi-
8	LAR OR OTHER HYBRID PLANS.—The Sec-
9	retary shall issue regulations which provide
10	that a defined benefit plan (or any portion
11	of such a plan) which has an effect similar
12	to a plan described in clause (i) shall be
13	treated as a cash balance plan. Such regu-
14	lations may provide that if a plan sponsor
15	represents in communications to partici-
16	pants and beneficiaries that a plan amend-
17	ment results in a plan being described in
18	the preceding sentence, such plan shall be
19	treated as a cash balance plan.
20	"(B) Notice date.—The term 'notice
21	date' means, with respect to an amendment de-
22	scribed in paragraph (1)—
23	"(i) in the case of a distress termi-
24	nation under section 4041(d) the date of

1	the advance notice of intent to terminate
2	provided pursuant to section 4041(a)(2),
3	"(ii) in the case of a termination initi-
4	ated by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Cor-
5	poration under section 4042, the date of
6	the application to the court under section
7	4042(c), and
8	"(iii) in the case of a conversion to a
9	cash balance plan, the date of the adoption
10	of the amendment.
11	"(C) COVERED DEFERRED COMPENSATION
12	PLAN.—
13	"(i) In general.—The term 'covered
14	deferred compensation plan' means any
15	plan providing for the deferral of com-
16	pensation of a disqualified individual,
17	whether or not—
18	"(I) compensation of the dis-
19	qualified individual which is deferred
20	under such plan is subject to substan-
21	tial risk of forfeiture,
22	"(II) the disqualified individual's
23	rights to the compensation deferred
24	under the plan are no greater than

1	the rights of a general creditor of the
2	plan sponsor,
3	"(III) all amounts set aside (di-
4	rectly or indirectly) for purposes of
5	paying the deferred compensation (in-
6	cluding income), and all income at-
7	tributable to such amounts, remain
8	(until made available to the disquali-
9	fied individual or other beneficiary)
10	solely the property of the plan sponsor
11	(without being restricted to the provi-
12	sion of benefits under the plan),
13	"(IV) the amounts referred to in
14	subclause (III) are available to satisfy
15	the claims of the plan sponsor's gen-
16	eral creditors at all times (not merely
17	after bankruptcy or insolvency), and
18	"(V) some or all of the com-
19	pensation of the disqualified individual
20	which is deferred under such plan is
21	guaranteed by an insurance company,
22	insurance service, or other similar or-
23	ganization.

1	"(ii) Exception for qualified
2	PLANS.—Such term shall not include a
3	plan that is—
4	"(I) described in section
5	219(g)(5)(A) of the Internal Revenue
6	Code of 1986, or
7	$"(\Pi)$ an eligible deferred com-
8	pensation plan (as defined in section
9	457(b) of such Code) of an eligible
10	employer described in section
11	457(e)(1)(A) of such Code.
12	"(iii) Plan includes arrange-
13	MENTS, ETC.—For purposes of this sub-
14	paragraph, the term 'plan' includes any
15	agreement or arrangement.
16	"(D) DISQUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL.—The
17	term 'disqualified individual' means a director
18	or executive officer of the plan sponsor.
19	"(E) TERMINATION BASED ON BANK-
20	RUPTCY REORGANIZATION.—A termination of a
21	plan which is a distress termination under sec-
22	tion 4041(c) or a termination instituted by the
23	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation under
24	section 4042 is 'based on bankruptcy reorga-
25	nization' if such termination is based in whole

or in part on the filing, by or against any person who is a contributing sponsor of such plan or a member of such sponsor's controlled group, of a petition seeking reorganization in a case under title 11, United States Code, or under any similar law of a State or political subdivision of a State (or such a case in which liquidation is sought has been converted to a case in which reorganization is sought).

"(F) TITLE IV TERMINOLOGY.—Any term used in this subsection which is defined in section 4001(a) shall have the meaning provided such term in section 4001(a).

"(4) Special rules.—

"(A) COORDINATED BENEFITS.—If the benefits of 2 or more defined benefit plans established or maintained by an employer are coordinated in such a manner as to have the effect of the adoption of an amendment described in paragraph (1), the sponsor of the defined benefit plan or plans providing for such coordination shall be treated as having adopted such a plan amendment as of the date such coordination begins.

- "(B) MULTIPLE AMENDMENTS.—The Secretary shall issue regulations to prevent the avoidance of the purposes of this subsection through the use of 2 or more plan amendments rather than a single amendment.
 - "(C) CONTROLLED GROUPS, ETC.—For purposes of this subsection, all persons treated as a single employer under subsection (b), (c), (m), or (o) of section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be treated as 1 employer.
 - "(D) Treatment of Earnings.—References to deferred compensation shall be treated as including references to income attributable to such compensation or such income.
 - "(5) COORDINATION.—The Secretary and the Secretary of the Treasury shall ensure, through the execution of an interagency memorandum of understanding among such Secretaries, that regulations, rulings, and interpretations issued by such Secretaries relating to the same matter over which both such Secretaries have responsibility under this subsection and section 4980H of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 are administered so as to have the same effect at all times.

1 "(6) Effect of waiver granted by sec-2 RETARY OF THE TREASURY.—To the extent that any 3 requirement of the termination fairness standard of section 4980H(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 5 1986 is waived by the Secretary of the Treasury 6 with respect to any disqualified individual under sec-7 tion 4980H(h) of such Code in the case of any plan 8 amendment having the effect of a termination de-9 scribed in paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection, such 10 requirement under the termination fairness standard 11 of paragraph (2) of this subsection shall not apply 12 with respect to such individual in the case of such 13 plan amendment.". SEC. 3. EXCISE TAX ON FUNDING NONQUALIFIED DE-COMPENSATION PLANS IN **FERRED** THE

- 14 SEC. 3. EXCISE TAX ON FUNDING NONQUALIFIED DE15 FERRED COMPENSATION PLANS IN THE
 16 EVENT OF A PENSION PLAN TERMINATION
 17 BASED ON BANKRUPTCY REORGANIZATION
 18 OR A CONVERSION OF A PENSION PLAN TO A
 19 CASH BALANCE PLAN.
- 20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 43 of the Internal Rev-21 enue Code of 1986 (relating to qualified pension, etc., 22 plans) is amended by adding at the end the following new 23 section:

1	"SEC. 4980H. FUNDING NONQUALIFIED DEFERRED COM-
2	PENSATION PLANS IN THE EVENT OF A PEN
3	SION PLAN TERMINATION BASED ON BANK
4	RUPTCY REORGANIZATION OR A CONVER
5	SION OF A PENSION PLAN TO A CASH BAL-
6	ANCE PLAN.
7	"(a) Imposition of Tax.—In any case in which a
8	corporation is a plan sponsor of a defined benefit plan with
9	respect to which an plan amendment is adopted that has
10	the effect of—
11	"(1) implementing a distress termination of the
12	plan under section 4041(c) of the Employee Retire-
13	ment Income Security Act of 1974 based on bank-
14	ruptcy reorganization or a termination of the plan
15	initiated by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corpora-
16	tion under section 4042 of such Act based on bank-
17	ruptcy reorganization, in any case in which the plan
18	is not sufficient for guaranteed benefits (within the
19	meaning of section 4041(d)(2) of such Act) as of the
20	proposed termination date, or
21	"(2) converting such plan to a cash balance
22	plan, in any case in which the amendment—
23	"(A) results in a significant reduction in
24	the rate of future benefit accruals (within the
25	magning of section $4980F(a)(1)$) of participants

1 with at least 10 years of service under the plan, 2 or "(B) does not provide for an election by af-3 4 fected participants with at least 10 years of service under the plan (and their beneficiaries) 6 to retain coverage under the terms of the plan 7 as in effect immediately prior to the amend-8 ment, there is hereby imposed a tax on any failure to meet the 10 termination fairness standard of subsection (b) with respect to such plan amendment. 11 "(b) TERMINATION FAIRNESS STANDARD.—A cov-12 ered deferred compensation plan established or maintained by a plan sponsor described in subsection (a) meets the 14 termination fairness standard of this subsection with respect to a plan amendment described in subsection (a) if, 16 during the 5-year period beginning on the date of the 18 adoption of such plan amendment— 19 "(1) no amount of deferred compensation ac-20 crues to a disqualified individual under the terms of 21 such covered deferred compensation plan (irrespec-22 tive of whether the accrual in deferred compensation 23 is expressed in the form of a promise, a guarantee,

or any other representation), and

1	"(2) in the case of a covered deferred com-
2	pensation plan established during or after the 1-year
3	period preceding the notice date (or any amendment
4	to a covered deferred compensation plan if such
5	amendment is adopted during or after such 1-year
6	period), no distribution of accrued deferred com-
7	pensation is made under such plan (or such amend-
8	ment) to a disqualified individual.
9	"(c) Amount of Tax.—The amount of the tax im-
10	posed by subsection (a) shall be equal to the amount of
11	the accrual described in subsection (b)(1) comprising the
12	failure or the distribution described in subsection (b)(2)
13	comprising the failure.
14	"(d) Liability for Tax.—The plan sponsor shall be
15	liable for the tax imposed by this section.
16	"(e) Definitions.—For purposes of this section—
17	"(1) Cash balance plan.—
18	"(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'cash bal-
19	ance plan' means a defined benefit plan under
20	which the accrued benefit is expressed to par-
21	ticipants and beneficiaries as an amount other
22	than an annual benefit commencing at normal
23	retirement age.
24	"(B) REGULATIONS TO INCLUDE SIMILAR
25	OR OTHER HYBRID PLANS.—The Secretary

shall issue regulations which provide that a defined benefit plan (or any portion of such a plan) which has an effect similar to a plan described in subparagraph (A) shall be treated as a cash balance plan. Such regulations may provide that if a plan sponsor represents in communications to participants and beneficiaries that a plan amendment results in a plan being described in the preceding sentence, such plan shall be treated as a cash balance plan.

"(2) Notice date.—The term 'notice date' means with respect to an amendment described in subsection (a)—

"(A) in the case of a distress termination under section 4041(d) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, the date of the advance notice of intent to terminate provided pursuant to section 4041(a)(2) of such Act,

"(B) in the case of a termination initiated by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation under section 4042 of such Act, the date of the application to the court under section 4042(c) of such Act, and

1	"(C) in the case of a conversion to a cash
2	balance plan, the date of the adoption of the
3	amendment.
4	"(3) Covered deferred compensation
5	PLAN.—
6	"(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'covered de-
7	ferred compensation plan' means any plan pro-
8	viding for the deferral of compensation of a dis-
9	qualified individual, whether or not—
10	"(i) compensation of the disqualified
11	individual which is deferred under such
12	plan is subject to substantial risk of for-
13	feiture,
14	"(ii) the disqualified individual's
15	rights to the compensation deferred under
16	the plan are no greater than the rights of
17	a general creditor of the plan sponsor,
18	"(iii) all amounts set aside (directly or
19	indirectly) for purposes of paying the de-
20	ferred compensation, and all income attrib-
21	utable to such amounts, remain (until
22	made available to the participant or other
23	beneficiary) solely the property of the
24	(without being restricted to the provision
25	of benefits under the plan),

1	"(iv) the amounts referred to in
2	clause (iii) are available to satisfy the
3	claims of the plan sponsor's general credi-
4	tors at all times (not merely after bank-
5	ruptcy or insolvency), and
6	"(v) some or all of the compensation
7	of the disqualified individual which is de-
8	ferred under such plan is guaranteed by an
9	insurance company, insurance service, or
10	other similar organization.
11	"(B) Exception for qualified
12	PLANS.—Such term shall not include a plan
13	that is—
14	"(i) described in section 219(g)(5)(A),
15	or
16	"(ii) an eligible deferred compensation
17	plan (as defined in section 457(b)) of an
18	eligible described in section $457(e)(1)(A)$.
19	"(C) Plan includes arrangements,
20	ETC.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term
21	'plan' includes any agreement or arrangement.
22	"(4) DISQUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL.—The term
23	'disqualified individual' means a director or executive
24	officer of the plan sponsor.

1 "(5) Termination based on bankruptcy 2 REORGANIZATION.—A termination of a plan which is 3 a distress termination under section 4041(c) or a termination instituted by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation under section 4042 is 'based on 5 6 bankruptcy reorganization' if such termination is 7 based in whole or in part on the filing, by or against 8 any person who is a contributing sponsor of such 9 plan or a member of such sponsor's controlled 10 group, of a petition seeking reorganization in a case 11 under title 11, United States Code, or under any 12 similar law of a State or political subdivision of a 13 State (or such a case in which liquidation is sought 14 has been converted to a case in which reorganization 15 is sought).

"(6) TITLE IV TERMINOLOGY.—Any term used in this section which is defined in section 4001(a) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 shall have the meaning provided such term in such section 4001(a).

"(f) Special Rules.—

"(1) COORDINATED BENEFITS.—If the benefits of 2 or more defined benefit plans established or maintained by an are coordinated in such a manner as to have the effect of the adoption of an amend-

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

- ment described in subsection (a), the sponsor of the
 defined benefit plan or plans providing for such coordination shall be treated as having adopted such
 a plan amendment as of the date such coordination
 begins.
- 6 "(2) MULTIPLE AMENDMENTS.—The Secretary
 7 shall issue regulations to prevent the avoidance of
 8 the purposes of this section through the use of 2 or
 9 more plan amendments rather than a single amend10 ment.
- "(3) CONTROLLED GROUPS, ETC.—For purposes of this section, all persons treated as a single employer under subsection (b), (c), (m), or (o) of section 414 shall be treated as 1 employer.
- 15 "(4) Treatment of Earnings.—References to
 16 deferred compensation shall be treated as including
 17 references to income attributable to such compensa18 tion or such income.
- "(g) Coordination.—The Secretary and the Sec-20 retary of Labor shall ensure, through the execution of an 21 interagency memorandum of understanding among such 22 Secretaries, that regulations, rulings, and interpretations 23 issued by such Secretaries relating to the same matter 24 over which both such Secretaries have responsibility under 25 this section and section 206(g) of the Employee Retire-

ment Income Security Act of 1974 are administered so 2 as to have the same effect at all times. 3 "(h) WAIVER.— "(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any plan 4 5 amendment having the effect of a termination de-6 scribed in subsection (a)(1), the Secretary may 7 waive the application of any requirement of the ter-8 mination fairness standard of subsection (b) with re-9 spect to any disqualified individual who first com-10 mences service for the plan sponsor after the notice 11 date with respect to such plan amendment. The Sec-12 retary may grant any such waiver in the case of any 13 such plan amendment with respect to any such dis-14 qualified individual only after consultation with the 15 Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. The Sec-16 retary shall promptly notify the Secretary of Labor 17 of any such waiver granted by the Secretary. 18 "(2) REQUIREMENTS FOR WAIVER.—A waiver 19 may be granted under paragraph (1) only— "(A) upon the filing with the Secretary by 20 21 the plan sponsor of an application for such 22 waiver, in such form and manner as shall be 23 prescribed in regulations of the Secretary, "(B) upon a showing, to the satisfaction of 24 25 the Secretary, that such waiver is a business

l	necessity for the plan sponsor, as determined
2	under such regulations, and is in the best inter-
3	est of plan participants and beneficiaries, as de-
4	termined under such regulations, and

"(C) after the participants, in such form and manner as shall be provided in such regulations, have been notified of the filing of the application for the waiver and have been provided a reasonable opportunity to provide in advance comments to the Secretary regarding the proposed waiver.".

12 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections 13 for chapter 43 of such Code is amended by adding at the 14 end the following new item:

"4980H. Funding nonqualified deferred compensation plans in the event of a pension plan termination based on bankruptcy reorganization or a conversion of a pension plan to a cash balance plan.".

15 SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

6

7

8

9

10

11

The amendments made by this Act shall apply to plan amendments adopted on or after October 8, 2004.