109TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION

S. 1923

To address small business investment companies licensed to issue participating debentures, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 26, 2005

Ms. Snowe (for herself, Mr. Talent, and Mr. Bond) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

A BILL

To address small business investment companies licensed to issue participating debentures, and for other purposes.

- 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.
- 4 This Act may be cited as the "Small Business Invest-
- 5 ment and Growth Act of 2005".
- 6 SEC. 2. PARTICIPATING DEBENTURE COMPANIES.
- 7 Part A of title III of the Small Business Investment
- 8 Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 681 et seq.) is amended by adding
- 9 at the end the following:

1 "SEC. 321. PARTICIPATING DEBENTURE COMPANIES.

- 2 "(a) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the fol-3 lowing definitions shall apply:
- "(1) GENERAL PARTNER.—The term 'general partner' means an investor in a small business investment company that participates in the daily management of the small business investment company, and may include a managing partner in a limited liability company.
 - "(2) Gross received by a small business investment company, including investment proceeds (both return of capital and profit), interest, dividends, and fees, other than capital contributed by a partner, the proceeds of the issuance of participating debentures, and other money (if any) borrowed by the small business investment company.
 - "(3) Interim funding provider' means any entity that providers funding guaranteed by the Administration to a licensed company in between the periodic pools created by any trustee.
 - "(4) LICENSED COMPANY.—The term 'licensed company' means a small business investment company authorized to issue participating debentures by a license issued under section 301 for that purpose.

1	"(5) Limited Partner.—The term 'limited
2	partner' means an investor in a small business in-
3	vestment company, other than the Administrator,
4	that does not participate in the daily management of
5	the small business investment company.
6	"(6) Participating debenture.—The term
7	'participating debenture' means a debt security that
8	is—
9	"(A) in a form prescribed by the Adminis-
10	trator that obligates the issuing company to
11	pay—
12	"(i) on the fifth anniversary of the
13	date of issuance of the debenture, all ac-
14	crued interest on that debenture that has
15	not previously been paid;
16	"(ii) semiannually thereafter, interest
17	accruing after the fifth anniversary of the
18	date of issuance of the debenture; and
19	"(iii) any other amount required by
20	this subsection; and
21	"(B) is subject to the terms and conditions
22	set forth in this subsection and to any addi-
23	tional terms and conditions as may be pre-
24	scribed by the Administrator that are consistent
25	with this subsection.

1	"(7) Private collateral.—The term 'private
2	collateral' means any money that any private part-
3	ner has contractually committed to invest in a li-
4	censed company during the most recent licensing of
5	the licensed company, but that has not yet been paid
6	to the licensed company.
7	"(8) Trustee.—The term 'trustee' means an
8	entity that combines any securities, interests, or ob-
9	ligations from licensed companies in the partici-
10	pating debenture program under subsection (b) into
11	pools and issues trust certificates.
12	"(9) Trust certificate.—The term 'trust
13	certificate' means a certificate issued by the trustee
14	that represents an interest in a particular pool of
15	any securities, interests, or obligations from licensed
16	companies in the participating debenture program.
17	"(10) Trust certificate holder.—The
18	term 'trust certificate holder' means an investor that
19	purchases a trust certificate.
20	"(b) Participating Debentures Program.—
21	"(1) Guarantee of participating deben-
22	TURES.—
23	"(A) REDEMPTION PRICE AND INTER-
24	EST.—The Administrator is authorized to guar-
25	antee the payment of the redemption price and

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1	interest on a participating debenture issued by
2	a licensed company to the interim funding pro-
3	vider under such terms and conditions as the
4	Administrator shall establish by regulation.
5	"(B) Repayment in Default.—The Ad-
6	ministration is authorized to guarantee the re-
7	payment to the interim funding provider in the
8	event of a default by a licensed company, of the
9	funds advanced by the interim funding provider
10	to the licensed company pursuant to the agree-
11	ment between the Administration and the li-
12	censed company, under such terms and condi-
13	tions as the Administrator shall establish by
14	regulation.
15	"(C) Trust certificates.—The Admin-
16	istrator is authorized to guarantee the payment
17	of the redemption price and interest on a trust
18	certificate issued by the trustee to the trust cer-
19	tificate holders under such terms and conditions
20	as the Administrator shall establish by regula-
21	tion.
22	"(2) Guarantee fee.—The Administration is
23	authorized to charge a separate fee—
24	"(A) under paragraph (1)(A), to the in-

terim funding provider;

1	"(B) under paragraph (1)(B), to the li-
2	censed company; and
3	"(C) under paragraph (1)(C), to the trust-
4	ee.
5	"(3) Zero-subsidy.—Each of the fees author-
6	ized under paragraph (2) shall be sufficient to re-
7	duce the cost of each corresponding guarantee in
8	paragraph (1) to zero, as that term is defined under
9	the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990.
10	"(4) Matching payment streams.—With re-
11	spect to any participating debenture issued by a li-
12	censed company, or with respect to any security
13	issued representing an interest in a pool of such se-
14	curities, the amount and schedule of—
15	"(A) the interest payment obligations of
16	the Administration to the trust certificate hold-
17	ers shall be equal to the amount and schedule
18	of the interest obligations of the licensed com-
19	pany to the Administration; and
20	"(B) the principal redemption obligations
21	of the Administration to the trust certificate
22	holders shall be the same as the amount and
23	schedule of the licensed company's principal re-
24	demption obligations to the Administration.

1	"(5) Interest to interim funding pro-
2	VIDER.—
3	"(A) RIGHT TO RECEIVE INTEREST.—For
4	the advancing of monies to a licensed company
5	pursuant to the license of that company, the in-
6	terim funding provider shall have the right to
7	receive interest from the licensed company.
8	"(B) Amounts.—The interest authorized
9	under subparagraph (A) shall be calculated
10	based on the time period beginning on the date
11	on which the interim funding provider advances
12	the funding, and ending when the interim fund-
13	ing provider provides the securities of the li-
14	censed company to a trustee for the purpose of
15	pooling those securities and selling interests in
16	that pool.
17	"(C) Collection of interest.—The in-
18	terim funding provider may collect interest re-
19	ferred to in this paragraph by withholding
20	money from the money advanced to the licensed
21	company by the interim funding provider.
22	"(6) Maximum Leverage.—Notwithstanding
23	any other provision of this subsection, the Adminis-
24	trator may not guarantee a new participating deben-

ture to be issued by a small business investment

- company, and the company shall not make any distribution to its private investors, if immediately after such issuance or distribution the aggregate unpaid principal balance of the participating debentures issued by the company would exceed 200 percent of the leverageable capital of the licensed company.
 - "(7) Purchase of participating debentures.—The Administrator may authorize a trust or pool acting on behalf of the Administration to purchase participating debentures issued by a small business investment company, under such terms and conditions as the Administrator shall establish by regulation.
 - "(8) REDEMPTION.—Not later than 10 years after the date on which it is issued, a participating debenture shall be redeemed for an amount equal to its outstanding principal balance plus any accrued but unpaid interest on such participating debenture as of the date on which it is redeemed.

"(9) Interest.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Interest on a participating debenture is preferred and cumulative and is prepayable out of any gross receipts available for distribution and is in any event

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payable at the scheduled or accelerated maturity of the participating debenture.

"(B) Interest ON PRINCIPAL BAL-ANCE.—Interest on the principal balance outstanding of a participating debenture shall accrue on a daily basis, and unpaid accrued interest shall compound semiannually from the date of issuance of the debenture, at a rate determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, taking into consideration the current average market yield on outstanding marketable obligations of the United States with remaining periods to maturity comparable to the average maturities on such securities, adjusted to the nearest ½ of 1 percent, plus an additional charge, in an amount established annually by the Administrator, as necessary to reduce to zero the cost (as defined in section 502 of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a)) to the Administration of purchasing and guaranteeing participating debentures under this Act, which rate may not exceed 1.5 percent per annum, and which shall be paid to and retained by the Administration.

"(10) Payment defaults.—

- "(A) IN GENERAL.—In the event of a failure of a small business investment company to pay any principal or interest on a participating debenture when due (including any mandatory prepayment out of gross receipts), the licensed company shall be in default, and shall be subject to the provisions of subparagraphs (B) through (D).
 - "(B) ACCELERATION.—The Administration, in addition to any other remedies it may have, may demand immediate payment of the principal balance and accrued interest on any or all participating debentures issued by the defaulting company.
 - "(C) Default rate of interest.—The interest rate on the participating debenture with respect to which the payment default occurred may increase, at the discretion of the Administrator, by not greater than 50 basis points from the date of the payment default, and by not greater than an additional 50 basis points on each 6-month anniversary of that date, up to a maximum total increase of 300 basis points, until all of the payment defaults of

1	the defaulting company have been cured or
2	waived.
3	"(D) Private Collateral.—The Admin-
4	istration may apply the private collateral of the
5	licensed company to pay any interest or prin-
6	cipal payment that has not been paid on time
7	according to the payment schedule for the li-
8	censed company.
9	"(11) Liquidation of Licensed Company.—
10	In the event of the liquidation of a licensed company
11	issuing participating debentures under this sub-
12	section, a participating debenture shall be senior in
13	priority for all purposes to any interest in the
14	issuing company, whenever created. In liquidation,
15	the private collateral of the licensed company may,
16	at the option of the Administrator, be applied to pay
17	accrued interest and principal of outstanding partici-
18	pating debentures.
19	"(12) Default of a licensed company.—In
20	the event of the default of a licensed company
21	issuing participating debentures under this sub-
22	section—
23	"(A) a participating debenture shall be
24	senior in priority for all purposes to any inter-

est in the issuing company, whenever created;

and

"(B) at the option of the Administrator, the private collateral of the licensed company may be applied to pay accrued interest and principal on outstanding participating debentures.

"(13) Investment obligation.—

- "(A) IN GENERAL.—Any company issuing a participating debenture under this Act shall invest or commit to invest an amount equal to the outstanding face value of such participating debenture solely in equity capital.
- "(B) EQUITY CAPITAL.—In this subparagraph, the term 'equity capital' means common or preferred stock or a similar instrument, including subordinated debt with equity features which is not amortized and which provides for interest payments from appropriate sources, as determined by the Administrator.
- "(14) OTHER DEBT.—A licensed company issuing a participating debenture under this subsection shall have no debt other than leverage obtained in accordance with this Act, and temporary

debt in an amount equal to not more than 50 percent of the private capital of the company.

"(15) USE OF PROCEEDS.—Unless otherwise determined by the Administration, a licensed company may use the proceeds of a participating debenture issued by the company to pay the principal amount and accrued interest due on outstanding participating debentures issued by that company, if the company has outstanding equity capital invested in an amount equal to the amount being refinanced.

"(16) Distribution of gross receipts.—

"(A) In General.—Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, gross receipts, from any source or however categorized for generally accepted accounting principles or tax accounting purposes, shall be utilized first for the payment of accrued interest on participating debentures, then for repayment of participating debenture principal and contributed private capital, and finally for profit distributions, as provided in subparagraphs (B) through (G).

"(B) PAST DUE INTEREST AND PRIN-CIPAL.—Gross receipts shall first be used, within 10 days of receipt—

1	"(i) to pay any past due interest on
2	participating debentures issued by the li-
3	censed company; and
4	"(ii) when there is no past due inter-
5	est outstanding, to repay any past due
6	principal on such debentures (whether such
7	interest and principal are past due by their
8	terms or by acceleration).
9	"(C) Mandatory interest prepay-
10	MENT.—If no unpaid accrued interest or past
11	due principal is outstanding on any partici-
12	pating debenture issued by a licensed company,
13	the company shall use its gross receipts, not
14	later than the end of the calendar quarter in
15	which they were received (or the following cal-
16	endar quarter, if received within 15 days before
17	the end of a calendar quarter) to prepay ac-
18	crued interest on the participating debentures
19	issued by the company, which prepayments will
20	be applied to such accrued interest in the order
21	in which such interest would otherwise become
22	due and payable.
23	"(D) Amortization distributions.—If
24	no unpaid accrued interest or past due principal

is outstanding on any participating debenture

1	issued by a licensed company, the company
2	shall distribute its gross receipts—
3	"(i) to the Administration to amortize
4	outstanding participating debenture lever-
5	age; and
6	"(ii) to its private investors, pro rata
7	according to the ratio of outstanding par-
8	ticipating debenture leverage to out-
9	standing leverageable capital at the time of
10	distribution.
11	"(E) Post-amortization distribu-
12	TIONS.—If no accrued interest or principal is
13	outstanding on any participating debenture
14	issued by a licensed company, and the company
15	has no outstanding leverageable capital, the
16	gross receipts of the company shall—
17	"(i) until aggregate distributions to
18	private investors under this subparagraph
19	equal aggregate contributions to the cap-
20	ital of the company previously made by
21	private investors, be distributed to the Ad-
22	ministration, an amount equal to the initial
23	profit participation percentage of the total
24	amount being distributed with the remain-

1	ing gross receipts distributed to the private
2	investors;
3	"(ii) if aggregate distributions to pri-
4	vate investors under this subparagraph
5	equal or exceed aggregate contributions to
6	the capital of the company previously made
7	by private investors, be distributed to the
8	Administration an amount equal to the
9	final profit participation percentage of the
10	total amount being distributed, with the
11	remaining gross receipts distributed to the
12	private investors; and
13	"(iii) in the case of any post-amortiza-
14	tion distributions to the Administration
15	pursuant to this subparagraph, be deemed
16	to constitute 'additional' interest (not 'ac-
17	crued' interest).
18	"(F) Management expenses.—For pur-
19	poses of calculating the amount to be distrib-
20	uted to the Administration pursuant to sub-
21	paragraph (E), except as otherwise prescribed
22	by the Administration, the management ex-
23	penses of any company which issues partici-
24	pating debentures under this subsection shall

not be greater than 2.5 percent of the combined

1	capital of the company per year, plus, in the
2	case of a company with combined capital of less
3	than \$20,000,000, an additional \$125,000.
4	"(G) Definitions.—In this paragraph—
5	"(i) the term 'combined capital'
6	means the aggregate amount of private
7	capital and outstanding leverage;
8	"(ii) the term 'final profit participa-
9	tion percentage' means 50 percent of the
10	leverage ratio, reduced by the weighted av-
11	erage interest rate on the financing com-
12	mitments issued by the company;
13	"(iii) the term 'initial profit participa-
14	tion percentage' means 25 percent of the
15	leverage ratio, reduced by the weighted av-
16	erage interest rate on the financing com-
17	mitments issued by the company;
18	"(iv) the term 'leverage ratio' means
19	the ratio of the aggregate amount of fi-
20	nancing commitment leverage previously
21	drawn by the company (including leverage
22	that has been repaid, and not solely the
23	maximum amount at any one time out-
24	standing, if different) to the aggregate
25	amount of capital previously contributed to

1	the company by private investors (not sole-
2	ly the maximum amount at any one time
3	outstanding, if different);
4	"(v) the term 'management expenses'
5	includes management fees and any addi-
6	tional salaries, office expenses, travel, busi-
7	ness development costs, office and equip-
8	ment rental, bookkeeping, and the develop-
9	ment, investigation, and monitoring of in-
10	vestments paid by the licensed company,
11	but does not include the cost of services
12	provided by specialized outside consultants,
13	outside lawyers and outside auditors, who
14	perform services not generally expected of
15	a venture capital company nor does such
16	term include the cost of services provided
17	by any affiliate of the company which are
18	not part of the normal process of making
19	and monitoring venture capital invest-
20	ments; and
21	"(vi) the term 'outstanding
22	leverageable capital' means any aggregate
23	capital contributions received by a licensed

company from private investors which ex-

1	ceed aggregate distributions received by
2	the private investors from the company.
3	"(17) Exceptions to order of distribu-
4	TIONS.—
5	"(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding para-
6	graph (16)(D), if no unpaid accrued interest
7	(whether or not past due) and no past due prin-
8	cipal is outstanding on any participating deben-
9	ture issued by the licensed company subpara-
10	graph (B) through (D) of this paragraph shall
11	apply.
12	"(B) Tax distributions.—
13	"(i) In general.—The company may
14	make a special distribution of gross re-
15	ceipts or other cash to its private investors
16	without a corresponding distribution to the
17	Administration while principal is out-
18	standing on participating debentures
19	issued by the company, if—
20	"(I) the licensed company has an
21	investment in a business (referred to
22	in this subparagraph as the 'portfolio
23	company') organized as a limited li-
24	ability company (referred to in this

1	subparagraph as an 'LLC') or as a
2	partnership;
3	"(II) the portfolio company has
4	income which will be taxable to its
5	members or partners;
6	"(III) the portfolio company
7	makes a distribution to its members
8	or partners in an amount equal to
9	their assumed tax liability on the
10	portfolio company's taxable income
11	(referred to in this subparagraph as a
12	'tax distribution'); or
13	"(IV) the small business invest-
14	ment company is itself a partnership
15	or an LLC, so that any portfolio com-
16	pany income allocated to it is reallo-
17	cated to the private investors, and it
18	is they who are liable for payment of
19	tax on that income as if it was their
20	own income, whether or not they re-
21	ceive any cash in respect of that in-
22	come.
23	"(ii) Authority to make distribu-
24	TION.—In circumstances described in
25	clause (i), the issuing company may, prior

1	to April 15 of each calendar year, dis-
2	tribute to its private investors up to an
3	amount equal to the difference between—
4	"(I) the estimated aggregate
5	maximum tax liability of the private
6	investors on the income of portfolio
7	companies organized as LLCs or part-
8	nerships during the preceding cal-
9	endar year; and
10	"(II) the aggregate amount dis-
11	tributed to the private investors (other
12	than pursuant to this subparagraph)
13	since April 15 of the preceding cal-
14	endar year, but in no event more than
15	the aggregate amount of tax distribu-
16	tions that the issuing company re-
17	ceived from all of its portfolio compa-
18	nies during the preceding calendar
19	year.
20	"(C) Expenses.—A small business invest-
21	ment company may use its gross receipts to pay
22	previously incurred expenses (including manage-
23	ment fees) and other liabilities and it may, in
24	addition, retain additional gross receipts in an
25	expense reserve account in an amount which,

added to any existing expense reserve, does not exceed such reasonably anticipated expenses and other liabilities for the following 12-month period, provided such expenses and other liabilities are not prohibited under regulations established by the Administrator or other applicable law.

"(D) PREPAYMENT.—Subject to any applicable State law requirements, a small business investment company may use gross receipts or other cash to prepay outstanding participating debenture leverage and interest in whole or in part without penalty at any time.

"(18) Restrictions on distributions.—

"(A) LIQUIDITY AND OTHER ADMINISTRA-TIVE OR STATE LAW RESTRICTIONS.—A distribution under this subsection may not violate liquidity requirements or other applicable restrictions on distributions in regulations issued by the Administrator or under applicable State law.

"(B) Capital impairment or regu-LATORY VIOLATION.—If a small business investment company is in restricted operations or liquidation by reason of capital impairment or reg-

ulatory violation, the maturity date of the participating debentures issued by that company, including both principal and accrued interest, is subject to acceleration at the option of the Administrator, and, whether or not there has been such acceleration, up to 100 percent of all gross receipts and the private collateral of the licensed company may, at the option of the Administrator, be required to be distributed to the Administration until accrued interest and principal on the participating debentures issued by the company have been paid in full, in accordance with any terms and conditions that the Administrator may establish by regulation.

"(19) DISTRIBUTIONS IN KIND.—

"(A) ELECTION OF IN-KIND DISTRIBUTION OF SECURITIES.—A small business investment company that issues participating debentures may elect to make an in-kind distribution of securities at any time, subject to applicable securities laws and regulations, if such securities are publicly traded and marketable (or 'marketable securities'). Marketable securities distributed in kind shall be deemed to be gross receipts for purposes of this subsection, and their

1	distribution shall be subject to the priorities
2	and restrictions applicable to gross receipts
3	under this subsection and to applicable regula-
4	tions issued by the Administrator.
5	"(B) Treatment of administration
6	SHARE.—The licensed company shall either de-
7	posit the Administration share of such securi-
8	ties with a trustee designated by the Adminis-
9	trator, or retain the Administration share, if
10	the Administrator so directs and with the
11	agreement of the company.
12	"(C) RETENTION OF ADMINISTRATION
13	SHARE.—If the company retains the Adminis-
14	tration share, it shall sell such share and
15	promptly remit the proceeds to the Administra-
16	tion.
17	"(D) VALUE OF ADMINISTRATION'S
18	SHARE.—For purposes of this paragraph, the
19	value of the Administration share is—
20	"(i) the value of the securities, as of
21	the date of distribution to the Administra-
22	tion under subparagraph (B), or as of the
23	initial date of retention under subpara-

graph (C); and

"(ii) the controlling value for the purposes of determining the remaining liability of the company to the Administration, except that the Administration may receive a greater or lesser amount upon its ultimate sale of such share or upon the ultimate sale by the company of such share on behalf of the Administration.

"(20) Timing of distributions.—

"(A) In General.—Subject to paragraphs (16) and (18), any gross receipts received by a small business investment company issuing participating debentures under this subsection that are not placed in an expense reserve pursuant to paragraph (18)(C) shall be distributed by the last day of the fiscal quarter in which such gross receipts were received by the company, except that gross receipts received within 15 days before the end of a fiscal quarter shall be distributed by the last day of the subsequent fiscal quarter.

"(B) EXCEPTIONS TO TIMING OF DISTRIBUTIONS; MARKETABLE SECURITIES.—Gross receipts consisting of marketable securities shall be distributed within 6 months of the date of

- receipt, unless the small business investment company has obtained the prior consent of the
- 3 Administrator.
- 4 "(21) Reinvestment of gross receipts.— 5 Subject to such regulations and restrictions as may be prescribed by the Administrator, and by the 6 7 agreement of the private investors in a small business investment company, any gross receipts that ex-8 9 ceed the amount needed to make payments required 10 to be made to the Administration under this sub-11 section, may at the option of the company be rein-12 vested in qualified small businesses.
- "(c) Post-Distribution Computation.—After distributions have been made pursuant to this section, the Administration share of such distributions shall not be reduced or recomputed, except as expressly provided in this section.
- "(d) No Ownership Interest to Administra-19 the Administration any ownership interest in any small 20 the Administration any ownership interest in any small 21 business investment company which issues participating 22 debentures.
- 23 "(e) Conflict With Other Provisions.—

1	"(1) In General.—In the event of a conflict
2	between this subsection and any other provision of
3	this part A, this subsection shall apply.

"(2) Specific provisions.—In particular, the provisions of this section supersede subsections (g) and (h) of section 303 in their entirety with respect to all matters pertaining to participating debentures issued by a licensed company covered by this section.".

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