

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5405

To amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to provide emergency protection for retiree health benefits.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 5, 2000

Mr. TIERNEY (for himself, Mr. ANDREWS, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, and Mr. KILDEE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, 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 to provide emergency protection for retiree health benefits.

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 “Emergency Retiree
5 Health Benefits Protection Act of 2000”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Retired participants of group health plans
2 regulated by the Employee Retirement Income Secu-
3 rity Act of 1974 (ERISA) have been severely
4 harmed by the virtually unchecked practices of spon-
5 sors of such plans involving the post-retirement can-
6 cellation or reduction of health benefits which retir-
7 ees counted on receiving for their lifetimes.

8 (2) Such widespread post-retirement reductions
9 in retiree health benefits has led to a crisis in retiree
10 health care in which retirees—

11 (A) have been unable to substitute indi-
12 vidual coverage for the group coverage they
13 lost, or, in order to obtain individual coverage,
14 have jeopardized their economic security in re-
15 tirement;

16 (B) because of preexisting medical condi-
17 tions cannot obtain substitute coverage that
18 they can afford without depleting their life sav-
19 ings or have been unable to obtain adequate
20 medical care or medical care they had relied on
21 to deal with serious illness;

22 (C) have sustained catastrophic illnesses or
23 injuries or otherwise experienced a marked de-
24 terioration in their medical conditions or health

1 as a result of post-retirement changes to their
2 medical benefits;

3 (D) have been transferred indiscriminately
4 into improperly or inadequately managed health
5 maintenance organizations or other managed
6 care entities, resulting in the worsening rather
7 than improvement of prior medical conditions;
8 and

9 (E) in many instances, have failed to ob-
10 tain adequate relief in the courts due to highly
11 restrictive judicial interpretations which are in-
12 consistent with ERISA's underlying protective
13 purposes.

14 (3) The crisis in retirees healthcare generated
15 by the plan sponsor practice of post-retirement can-
16 cellations or reductions of previously promised re-
17 tiree health benefits has led to a widespread loss of
18 confidence in the integrity of ERISA-regulated
19 group health plans and the ability of ERISA itself
20 to adequately protect retiree health benefits.

21 (4) A strong and dependable private sector re-
22 tiree health system is necessary to the essential
23 health of our Nation's senior citizens.

24 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to en-
25 sure that the reasonable health benefit expectations of re-

1 tirees from ERISA-regulated group health plans are ful-
2 filled, to minimize the incidence of prolonged legal dis-
3 putes arising out of the post-retirement cancellation or re-
4 duction of retiree health benefits from such plans, and to
5 prevent further adverse effects on retiree health arising
6 from such post-retirement changes. To this end, the pur-
7 poses of this Act also include the following:

8 (1) to safeguard retired participants of group
9 health plans subject to the Employee Retirement In-
10 come Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.)
11 from loss or reduction of their health benefits from
12 such plans by barring plan sponsors from canceling
13 or reducing such benefits after the dates such par-
14 ticipants retire and when they no longer are able to
15 absorb such losses or reductions without experi-
16 encing adverse effects on their health or finances;

17 (2) to establish an enforceable obligation on the
18 part of sponsors of such group health plans to re-
19 store health benefits previously taken away from re-
20 tired participants of such plans to the extent such
21 benefits were canceled or altered after the dates
22 such participants retired and the plan sponsor would
23 not sustain substantial business hardship by restor-
24 ing such benefits; and

1 (3) to establish an Emergency Retiree Health
2 Loan Guarantee Program to assist sponsors of
3 group health plans subject to the obligation to re-
4 store retiree health benefits under this Act to obtain
5 credit to assist them in discharging such obligations
6 by providing retiree health loan guarantees that
7 would encourage the availability of such credit.

8 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENT OF EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT INCOME**
9 **SECURITY ACT OF 1974 TO PROVIDE RETIREE**
10 **HEALTH BENEFIT PROTECTIONS IN GROUP**
11 **HEALTH PLANS.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle B of title I of the Em-
13 ployee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 is amend-
14 ed by adding at the end a new part 8 as follows:

15 **“PART 8—EMERGENCY RETIREE HEALTH**
16 **BENEFIT PROTECTIONS**
17 **“SEC. 801. PROHIBITION AGAINST POST-RETIREMENT RE-**
18 **DUCTIONS OF RETIREE HEALTH BENEFITS**
19 **BY GROUP HEALTH PLANS.**

20 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding that a group
21 health plan described in subsection (b) may contain a pro-
22 vision reserving the general power to amend or terminate
23 the plan or a provision specifically authorizing the plan
24 to make post-retirement reductions in retiree health bene-
25 fits, it shall be prohibited for any group health plan,

1 whether through amendment or otherwise, to reduce the
2 benefits provided to a retired participant or his or her ben-
3 efiary under the terms of the plan if such reduction of
4 benefits occurs after the date the participant retired for
5 purposes of the plan and reduces benefits that were pro-
6 vided to the participant, or his or her beneficiary, as of
7 the date the participant retired. Any group health plan
8 provision which purports to authorize the reduction of
9 benefits in a manner inconsistent with the foregoing prohi-
10 bition shall be void as against public policy.

11 “(b) GROUP HEALTH PLAN.—The term ‘group
12 health plan’ shall have the same meaning as in section
13 607(1).

14 “(c) PROHIBITED REDUCTION OF BENEFITS.—As
15 used in this section, references to a prohibited reduction
16 of benefits means any group health plan amendment or
17 other action which has the effect of—

18 “(1) canceling, decreasing or limiting the
19 amount, type, level, or form of any benefit or option
20 provided prior to the amendment or action;

21 “(2) imposing or increasing the out-of-pocket
22 costs a retired participant, or his or her beneficiary,
23 must pay in order to keep or obtain any benefits
24 that were provided to the participant or beneficiary
25 prior to the amendment or action; or

1 “(3) modifying the manner by which medical
2 services are delivered under the plan so that after
3 the amendment or action a retired participant, or
4 his or her beneficiary, has less ready access to the
5 delivery of any such medical services than the partic-
6 ipant or beneficiary had prior to the amendment or
7 action.

8 “(d) TREATMENT OF PLAN TERMINATION.—

9 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), a
10 termination of a group health plan shall be treated
11 as violating the prohibition contained in this section
12 if, after the termination, the plan sponsor of the ter-
13 minated plan fails to continue to provide to the par-
14 ticipants who retired prior to the termination and to
15 their beneficiaries the same retiree health benefits
16 that were provided prior to the termination.

17 “(2) WAIVER.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply
18 in the case of the termination of a group health plan
19 if the Secretary issues a waiver under this para-
20 graph in connection with such termination. The Sec-
21 retary shall issue such a waiver if and only if the
22 plan sponsor demonstrates to the satisfaction of the
23 Secretary, in accordance with regulations prescribed
24 by the Secretary, that such plan sponsor will be un-

1 able to continue in business unless such a waiver is
2 issued.

3 “(e) CONSENT OR AUTHORIZATION BY PARTICI-
4 PANT.—A reduction of benefits shall not be treated as pro-
5 hibited by this section if such reduction is consented to
6 in writing by any retired participant or is authorized with
7 respect to the retired participant under the terms of one
8 or more agreements which the Secretary finds to be collec-
9 tive bargaining agreements between one or more employee
10 representatives who were representing such participant at
11 the time of the entry into such agreement and one or more
12 employers.

13 **“SEC. 802. ADOPTION BY GROUP HEALTH PLANS OF PROVI-**
14 **SION BARRING POST-RETIREMENT REDUC-**
15 **TIONS IN RETIREE HEALTH BENEFITS.**

16 “Every group health plan shall contain a provision
17 which expressly bars the plan, or any fiduciary of the plan,
18 from reducing the benefits provided under the plan to a
19 retired participant, or his or her beneficiary, if such reduc-
20 tion affects the benefits provided to the participant or ben-
21 eficiary as of the date the participant retired for purposes
22 of the plan and such reduction occurs after the partici-
23 pant’s retirement.

1 **“SEC. 803. RESTORATION BY GROUP HEALTH PLANS OF**
2 **BENEFITS REDUCED AFTER RETIREMENT.**

3 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The plan sponsor of each group
4 health plan shall provide, in accordance with this section,
5 the option of benefit restoration to each retired participant
6 that meets the following requirements:

7 “(1) The retired participant is entitled to ben-
8 efit coverage under the plan as of the date of enact-
9 ment of the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Pro-
10 tection Act of 2000.

11 “(2) The amount, type, level, or form of any
12 benefits or option provided to the retired participant
13 under the plan as of the date the participant retired
14 was reduced after the participant’s date of retire-
15 ment. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the
16 term ‘reduced’ has the same meaning as in section
17 801(c).

18 “(3) The retired participant has elected to re-
19 store benefits under the plan within the restoration
20 period prescribed by subsection (c) and in accord-
21 ance with such procedures established by the plan
22 pursuant to regulations of the Secretary.

23 “(b) EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN PLANS.—In accord-
24 ance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary, sub-
25 section (a) shall not apply to any group health plan with
26 less than 100 participants both on and after the date of

1 enactment of the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Pro-
2 tection Act of 2000.

3 “(c) RESTORATION PERIOD.—The term ‘restoration
4 period’ means the period which—

5 “(1) begins not later than 1 year after the date
6 of enactment of the Emergency Retiree Health Ben-
7 efits Protection Act of 2000;

8 “(2) ends before 2 years from such date, unless
9 extended by the Secretary pursuant to section
10 804(g); and

11 “(3) is of no less than 60 days duration.

12 “(d) NOTICE REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING RES-
13 TORATION OF BENEFITS.—In accordance with regulations
14 prescribed by the Secretary, each group health plan sub-
15 ject to the requirements of subsection (a) shall, within no
16 less than 30 days prior to the commencement of the plan’s
17 restoration of benefits period, provide written notice to
18 each retired participant of the plan who meets the require-
19 ments of subsection (a) of the following:

20 “(1) A description of all benefits the retired
21 participant is entitled to have restored.

22 “(2) The administrative procedure established
23 under the plan which may be used to submit a claim
24 for the restoration of any benefits.

1 “(3) An itemization of the value of each benefit
2 the retired participant is entitled to have restored,
3 as determined in accordance with regulations of the
4 Secretary, and the total value of all such benefits.

5 “(4) A description of any post-retirement in-
6 creases in retiree health benefits the retired partici-
7 pant received which the plan sponsor could rescind
8 if the retired participant asserts a claim for the res-
9 toration of benefits.

10 “(5) An itemization of the value of each retiree
11 health benefit the plan sponsor could rescind, as de-
12 termined in accordance with regulations of the Sec-
13 retary, and the total value of all such benefits.

14 “(6) If the plan sponsor has filed an application
15 for a substantial business hardship exemption under
16 section 804, the date such application was filed, the
17 date notice of such application was given to retired
18 participants entitled to submit a claim for the res-
19 toration of benefits, and the status of such applica-
20 tion as of the date of the notice sent pursuant to
21 this subsection.

22 “(7) Such other information in such form and
23 detail as may be prescribed by the Secretary to carry
24 out the purposes of this part.

1 “(e) DEADLINE FOR RESTORATION OF BENEFITS.—
2 Regardless of any extension that may be granted by the
3 Secretary pursuant to section 804(g), all benefits required
4 to be restored under this section shall be restored within
5 no more than 3 years from the date of enactment of the
6 Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act of
7 2000, or the date the plan sponsor files an application for
8 an exemption under section 804, whichever comes last.

9 **“SEC. 804. EXEMPTION FROM RESTORATION OF BENEFITS**
10 **REQUIREMENTS.**

11 “(a) APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION.—Any plan
12 sponsor of a group health plan that would sustain substan-
13 tial business hardship if required to fulfill, in whole or in
14 part, the restoration of benefits requirements contained in
15 section 803, may file an application for an exemption with
16 the Secretary from any or all of such requirements.

17 “(b) AUTHORITY FOR WAIVER OR VARIANCE.—In re-
18 sponse to an application filed by a plan sponsor pursuant
19 to subsection (a), the Secretary may waive or vary the re-
20 quirements of section 803 with respect to any or all of
21 such requirements, including postponing for reasonable
22 periods of time the obligation of the plan sponsor to re-
23 store reduced benefits, if the Secretary finds that compli-
24 ance by the plan sponsor with the requirements of section
25 803 would—

1 “(1) be adverse to the interests of plan partici-
2 pants in the aggregate;

3 “(2) not be administratively feasible; and

4 “(3) cause substantial business hardship to the
5 plan sponsor.

6 “(c) FACTORS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.—For pur-
7 poses of this section, the factors to be taken into account
8 in determining substantial business hardship shall include
9 (but shall not be limited to) whether—

10 “(1) the plan sponsor is operating at an eco-
11 nomic loss;

12 “(2) compliance with the restoration of benefits
13 requirements would necessitate substantial future re-
14 ductions in health benefits provided to participants
15 under the plan or cause a substantial decline in em-
16 ployment with the plan sponsor;

17 “(3) it is reasonable to expect that the plan will
18 be continued only if a waiver or appropriate variance
19 is granted; and

20 “(4) the provisions of the Retiree Health Loan
21 Guarantee Program established under section 805
22 are unavailable to the plan sponsor submitting the
23 application, or, if available, still would not provide a
24 sufficient basis for denying a waiver or variance.

25 “(d) REQUIREMENT OF SATISFACTORY EVIDENCE.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, before
2 granting a waiver or variance under this section, re-
3 quire each applicant to provide evidence satisfactory
4 to the Secretary that the applicant has provided
5 timely written notice of the filing of an application
6 for such waiver or variance to each retired partici-
7 pant entitled to submit a claim for the restoration
8 of benefits under the applicant’s plan.

9 “(2) TIMELINESS.—For purposes of paragraph
10 (1), a written notice shall be considered timely if it
11 is provided not later than 60 days prior to the date
12 the plan sponsor files an application for a waiver or
13 variance under this section.

14 “(3) INFORMATION REQUIRED.—The notice re-
15 ferred to in paragraph (1) shall include information
16 with respect to the specific relief that will be sought
17 by the plan sponsor’s application, the period of time
18 for which relief is sought, and such other relevant
19 information as the Secretary may prescribe.

20 “(e) PARTICIPATION IN PROCEEDINGS BY RETIRED
21 PLAN PARTICIPANTS.—Each retired participant entitled
22 to submit a claim for the restoration of benefits within
23 the meaning of this section shall be provided a reasonable
24 opportunity to submit comments or otherwise participate
25 in any proceeding established by the Secretary to deter-

1 mine whether to grant or deny an application for a waiver
2 or variance filed by the retired participant’s plan sponsor.

3 “(f) EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN APPLICATIONS.—The
4 Secretary shall not be authorized to grant any application
5 for a waiver or variance purporting to satisfy the require-
6 ments of subsection (b) if—

7 “(1) within the 5-year period preceding the date
8 of the plan sponsor’s application the plan sponsor
9 could have transferred excess pension assets to a
10 health benefits account within the meaning of sec-
11 tion 420 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (as
12 in effect on the date of the enactment of the Tax
13 Relief Extension Act of 1999) but failed to do so,
14 and the plan sponsor is submitting an application on
15 behalf of such retiree health account; or

16 “(2) the plan sponsor submitting the applica-
17 tion also maintains a fully funded pension plan with
18 respect to which—

19 “(A) retired participants eligible to submit
20 a claim for the restoration of benefits under
21 section 803 are also eligible to receive ad hoc
22 cost-of-living adjustment benefits;

23 “(B) the assets of the fully funded pension
24 plan, over the past 5 years preceding the date
25 of application for a waiver or variance, on aver-

1 age have exceeded 120 percent of the plan’s li-
2 abilities;

3 “(C) the plan had no minimum funding re-
4 quirement to satisfy within the 5 years pre-
5 ceding the date of application for the waiver or
6 variance and the plan sponsor submitting the
7 application made no minimum funding con-
8 tribution to the fully funded pension plan dur-
9 ing such 5-year period; and

10 “(D) the plan sponsor submitting the ap-
11 plication for a waiver or variance failed to pro-
12 vide an ad hoc cost-of-living adjustment benefit
13 from the fully funded pension plan during the
14 5-year period preceding the date of application
15 for the waiver or variance.

16 “(g) RUNNING OF RESTORATION PERIOD SUS-
17 PENDED.—The submission of an application for a waiver
18 or variance pursuant to this section shall suspend the run-
19 ning of any relevant restoration period as specified in sub-
20 section (e). Where appropriate, the Secretary shall direct
21 the reopening of any relevant restoration period upon the
22 final conclusion of proceedings to determine whether an
23 application should be granted or denied.

1 **“SEC. 805. ESTABLISHMENT OF EMERGENCY RETIREE**
2 **HEALTH LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM.**

3 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

4 “(1) BOARD.—The term ‘Board’ means the
5 Emergency Retiree Health Loan Guarantee Board
6 established under subsection (c).

7 “(2) PROGRAM.—The term ‘Program’ means
8 the Emergency Retiree Health Loan Guarantee Pro-
9 gram established under subsection (b).

10 “(3) ELIGIBLE PLAN SPONSOR.—The term ‘eli-
11 gible plan sponsor’ means any plan sponsor as de-
12 fined in section 3(16)(B) that maintains a group
13 health plan subject to the retiree health benefits res-
14 toration requirements of section 803.

15 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF EMERGENCY RETIREE
16 HEALTH LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM.—There is estab-
17 lished the Retiree Health Loan Guarantee Program, to be
18 administered by the Board, the purpose of which is to pro-
19 vide loan guarantees to eligible plan sponsors in accord-
20 ance with this section.

21 “(c) RETIREE HEALTH LOAN GUARANTEE BOARD
22 MEMBERSHIP.—There is established a Retiree Health
23 Loan Guarantee Board, which shall be composed of—

24 “(1) the Secretary of Labor, who shall serve as
25 Chairman of the Board;

26 “(2) the Secretary of Commerce;

1 “(3) the Secretary of the Treasury;

2 “(4) the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
3 ices; and

4 “(5) the Chairman of the Council of Economic
5 Advisers.

6 “(d) RETIREE HEALTH LOAN GUARANTEE
7 PROGRAM—

8 “(1) AUTHORITY.—The Program may guar-
9 antee loans provided by private banking and invest-
10 ment institutions to eligible plan sponsors for pur-
11 poses of assisting such plan sponsors to meet their
12 obligations under section 803. Such loan guarantees
13 shall be provided to the extent provided in advance
14 in appropriation Acts pursuant to paragraph (4) and
15 only in accordance with the procedures, rules, and
16 regulations established by the Board.

17 “(2) TOTAL GUARANTEE LIMIT.—The aggre-
18 gate amount of loans guaranteed and outstanding at
19 any time under this section may not exceed
20 \$5,000,000,000.

21 “(3) INDIVIDUAL GUARANTEE LIMIT.—The ag-
22 gregate amount of loans guaranteed under this sec-
23 tion with respect to a single eligible plan sponsor
24 may not exceed \$5,000,000.

1 “(4) ADDITIONAL COSTS.—For the additional
2 cost of loans guaranteed under this subsection, in-
3 cluding the costs of modifying the loans, as defined
4 in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of
5 1974 (2 U.S.C. 661a), there is authorized to be ap-
6 propriated \$200,000,000, to remain available until
7 expended.

8 “(e) REQUIREMENTS FOR LOAN GUARANTEES.—A
9 loan guarantee may be issued under this section upon ap-
10 plication to the Board by an eligible plan sponsor pursuant
11 to an agreement to provide a loan to that eligible plan
12 sponsor by a private bank or investment company, if the
13 Board determines that—

14 “(1) credit is not otherwise available to that eli-
15 gible plan sponsor under reasonable terms and con-
16 ditions sufficient to meet its financing needs with re-
17 spect to the restoration of retiree health benefits, as
18 reflected in the financial and business plans of that
19 eligible plan sponsor;

20 “(2) the prospective earning power of that eligi-
21 ble plan sponsor, together with the character and
22 value of the security pledged, furnish reasonable as-
23 surance of repayment of the loan to be guaranteed
24 in accordance with its terms;

1 “(3) the loan to be guaranteed bears interest at
2 a rate determined by the Board to be reasonable,
3 taking into account the current average yield on out-
4 standing obligations of the United States with re-
5 maining periods of maturity comparable to the ma-
6 turity of such loan;

7 “(4) the loan to be guaranteed will materially
8 assist that eligible plan sponsor to discharge its obli-
9 gation to comply with the restoration of benefits re-
10 quirements contained in section 803; and

11 “(5) the eligible plan sponsor has agreed to an
12 audit by the General Accounting Office prior to the
13 issuance of the loan guarantee and annually while
14 any such guaranteed loan is outstanding.

15 “(f) TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF LOAN GUAR-
16 ANTEE.—

17 “(1) LOAN DURATION.—All loans guaranteed
18 under this section shall be payable in full not later
19 than December 31, 2008, and the terms and condi-
20 tions of each such loan shall provide that the loan
21 may not be amended or any provision thereof waived
22 without the consent of the Board.

23 “(2) LOAN SECURITY.—Any commitment to
24 issue a loan guarantee under this section shall con-
25 tain such affirmative and negative covenants and

1 other protective provisions that the Board deter-
2 mines are appropriate.

3 “(3) FEES.—An eligible plan sponsor receiving
4 a guarantee under this section shall pay a fee in an
5 amount equal to 0.5 percent of the outstanding prin-
6 cipal balance of the guaranteed loan to the Depart-
7 ment of the Treasury.

8 “(g) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary of
9 Labor shall submit annually to each House of the Con-
10 gress a full report of the activities of the Board under
11 this section during 2001 and 2002, and annually there-
12 after during such period as any loan guaranteed under
13 this section is outstanding. Such report shall be submitted
14 not later than January 31, of each year (beginning in
15 2001).

16 “(h) SALARIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—
17 For necessary expenses to administer the Program, there
18 is authorized to be appropriated to the Department of
19 Labor (and to be transferred to the Office of the Assistant
20 Secretary for Pension and Welfare Benefits Administra-
21 tion) \$10,000,000, to remain available until expended.

22 “(i) TERMINATION OF GUARANTEE AUTHORITY.—
23 The authority of the Board to make commitments to guar-
24 antee any loan under this section shall terminate on De-
25 cember 31, 2004.

1 “(j) REGULATORY ACTION.—The Board shall issue
2 such final procedures, rules, and regulations as may be
3 necessary to carry out this section not later than 90 days
4 after the date of enactment of the Emergency Retiree
5 Health Benefits Protection Act of 2000. In no event shall
6 the Board issue a procedure, rule, or regulation which au-
7 thorizes it to approve or deny any application for a loan
8 guarantee in more than 270 days after receipt of such ap-
9 plication.

10 “(k) EMERGENCY DESIGNATION.—The entire
11 amount made available to carry out this section—

12 “(1) is designated by Congress as an emergency
13 requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the
14 Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control
15 Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)); and

16 “(2) shall be available only to the extent that
17 an official budget request that includes designation
18 of the entire amount as an emergency requirement
19 (as defined in the Balanced Budget and Emergency
20 Deficit Control Act of 1985) is transmitted by the
21 President to the Congress.

22 **“SEC. 806. EFFECT ON OTHER CLAIMS.**

23 “(a) OTHER CLAIMS UNAFFECTED.—Nothing con-
24 tained in this part shall be construed to alter, impair, or
25 eliminate any claim for retiree health benefits based on

1 conduct alleged to violate the terms of a group health plan,
2 any provision of this Act (other than this part), or both,
3 regardless of whether such conduct occurred prior to, on,
4 or after, the effective date of this part.

5 “(b) OTHER CAUSES OF ACTION NOT AUTHOR-
6 IZED.—Unless the conduct giving rise to a claim for re-
7 tiree health benefits is alleged to violate the provisions of
8 this part, nothing contained in this part shall be construed
9 to authorize any other cause of action for the recovery of
10 retiree health benefits.

11 **“SEC. 807. REGULATIONS.**

12 “The Secretary may promulgate such regulations as
13 may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this part.
14 The Secretary may promulgate any interim final rules as
15 the Secretary deems are appropriate to carry out this part.

16 **“SEC. 808. ENFORCEMENT.**

17 “The enforcement provisions of sections 501 and 502
18 shall be applicable to this part.”.

19 (b) CIVIL PENALTY SECTION.—Section 502(c) of the
20 Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29
21 U.S.C. 1132(e)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
22 lowing new paragraph:

23 “(8) The Secretary may assess a civil penalty of not
24 more than \$1,000 for each separate violation of section
25 801, 802, or 803 by any person individually with respect

1 to each participant or beneficiary aggrieved by such viola-
2 tion.”.

3 (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of con-
4 tents in section 1 of such Act is amended by inserting
5 after the item relating to section 734 the following new
6 items:

“PART 8—EMERGENCY RETIREE HEALTH BENEFIT PROTECTIONS

“Sec. 801. Prohibition against post-retirement reductions of retiree health ben-
efits by group health plans.

“Sec. 802. Adoption by group health plans of provision barring post-retirement
reductions in retiree health benefits.

“Sec. 803. Restoration by group health plans of benefits reduced after retire-
ment.

“Sec. 804. Exemption from restoration of benefits requirements.

“Sec. 805. Establishment of emergency retiree health loan guarantee program.

“Sec. 806. Effect on other claims.

“Sec. 807. Regulations.

“Sec. 808. Enforcement.”.

7 **SEC. 4. SEPARABILITY OF PROVISIONS.**

8 The provisions of section 509 of the Employee Retire-
9 ment Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1139) shall
10 be applicable to this Act and the amendments made there-
11 by.

12 **SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

13 The amendments made by this Act shall take effect
14 on the date of the enactment of this Act.

○