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DOL GRANTS ASPPA REQUESTED RELIEF ON EFAST2 *Plan Sponsors Will Not Need Credentials*

ARLINGTON, VA (May 13, 2010)— The American Society of Pension Professionals & Actuaries (ASPPA) commends the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) on the changes to the filing requirements under the EFAST2 Form 5500 filing system released today. We appreciate the DOL's timely response to our petition, providing a straightforward method for plan sponsors to authorize practitioners to assist them in meeting their responsibilities.

The relief provided will be extremely beneficial—particularly to small employers who are challenged by the new mandatory electronic filing system. The revised procedures will reduce the cost and burden to plan sponsors, while ensuring the accuracy and integrity of the annual report.

"We're pleased and gratified by Assistant Secretary of Labor, Phyllis Borzi's timely and practical response to the relief ASPPA and its members requested. This is a prime example of how ASPPA works with the DOL on compliance issues to reach practical solutions that benefit all concerned parties. We look forward to a continuing dialogue with DOL on matters such as these. We both share the same goal of encouraging the sponsorship of employee benefit plans and compliance with the law," said Craig Hoffman, ASPPA General Counsel and Director of Regulatory Affairs.

In February of this year, nearly 800 firms who work with plan sponsors on filing their annual report joined ASPPA in a [petition](#) to the Assistant Secretary of Labor requesting a change. The original rules required each plan sponsor go through the cumbersome process of obtaining the necessary EFAST2 filing credentials on their own. Under that system, practitioners were not allowed to assist in the process without violating security protocols.

In the petition, ASPPA noted the extra burden the original procedure placed on plan sponsors, especially those who are smaller and less sophisticated. Many smaller businesses have neither the staffing nor the resources to properly understand and easily use the EFAST2 system. Even in this day and age, many small businesses don't have computers or access to high-speed internet—their management focuses on simply running the business. Professionals are hired to ensure their employee benefit plans are in compliance with the law and proper reports are filed in a timely manner.

ASPPA urged DOL to provide an employer-friendly (and practitioner-friendly) alternative to the original rules. ASPPA's members are uniquely positioned to understand the challenges businesses face in meeting their obligation to file an annual report. The relief announced today will greatly simplify the process.

Under the new procedure, practitioners with proper authorization from the plan sponsor will be able to file the Form 5500 using the practitioner's signing credentials. This alleviates the need for the plan sponsor to navigate the EFAST2 system to obtain credentials of their own. This new approach will ease the transition to the new mandatory electronic filing system. We believe the changes announced today will streamline the process, reduce costs and will ultimately benefit plan participants.

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About ASPPA: The American Society of Pension Professionals & Actuaries (ASPPA) is a national organization of more than 7,000 retirement plan and benefits professionals that serves as the educator, voice, and advocate for the employer-based retirement system. ASPPA members are administrators, actuaries, advisors, attorneys, accountants, and other financial services professionals who provide consulting and administrative services for qualified retirement plans. www.asppa.org

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