

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5804

To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rules relating to the treatment of individuals as independent contractors or employees, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 15, 2008

Mr. McDERMOTT (for himself, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. STARK, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. HARE, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. KAGEN, and Mr. LEVIN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

A BILL

To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rules relating to the treatment of individuals as independent contractors or employees, 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 “Taxpayer Responsi-
5 bility, Accountability, and Consistency Act of 2008”.

1 **SEC. 2. INFORMATION REPORTING FOR PAYMENTS TO COR-**
2 **PORATIONS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6041 of the Internal Rev-
4 enue Code of 1986 (relating to information at source) is
5 amended by adding at the end the following new sub-
6 section:

7 “(h) PAYMENTS TO CORPORATIONS.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any regu-
9 lations prescribed by the Secretary before the date
10 of the enactment of this subsection, subsection (a)
11 shall apply to payments made to a corporation.

12 “(2) EXCEPTION.—Paragraph (1) shall not
13 apply to payments made to a hospital or extended
14 care facility described in section 501(c)(3) which is
15 exempt from taxation under section 501(a) or to a
16 hospital or extended care facility owned and oper-
17 ated by the United States, a State, the District of
18 Columbia, a possession of the United States, or a
19 political subdivision, agency or instrumentality of
20 any of the foregoing.”.

21 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by
22 this section shall apply to payments made more than 1
23 year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

1 **SEC. 3. DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR SAFE HAR-**
2 **BOR TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUALS AS NON-**
3 **EMPLOYEES FOR PURPOSES OF EMPLOY-**
4 **MENT TAXES.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 25 of the Internal Rev-
6 enue Code of 1986 (relating to general provisions relating
7 to employment taxes) is amended by adding at the end
8 the following new section:

9 **“SEC. 3511. SAFE HARBOR.**

10 **“(a) TERMINATION OF CERTAIN EMPLOYMENT TAX**
11 **LIABILITY.—**

12 **“(1) IN GENERAL.—If—**

13 **“(A) for purposes of employment taxes, the**
14 **taxpayer did not treat an individual as an em-**
15 **ployee for any period, and**

16 **“(B) in the case of periods after December**
17 **31, 1978, all Federal tax returns (including in-**
18 **formation returns) required to be filed by the**
19 **taxpayer with respect to such individual for**
20 **such period are filed on a basis consistent with**
21 **the taxpayer’s treatment of such individual as**
22 **not being an employee,**

23 **then, for purposes of applying such taxes for such**
24 **period with respect to the taxpayer, the individual**
25 **shall be deemed not to be an employee unless the**
26 **taxpayer had no reasonable basis for not treating**

1 such individual as an employee. This paragraph shall
2 not apply with respect to an individual for any peri-
3 ods beginning after the date of notice of a deter-
4 mination that such individual should be treated as
5 an employee of the taxpayer.

6 “(2) STATUTORY STANDARDS FOR SATISFYING
7 THE REQUIREMENTS OF PARAGRAPH (1).—For pur-
8 poses of paragraph (1), a taxpayer shall be treated
9 as having a reasonable basis for not treating an indi-
10 vidual as an employee only if—

11 “(A) the taxpayer’s treatment of such indi-
12 vidual was in reasonable reliance on—

13 “(i) a written determination (as de-
14 fined in section 6110(b)(1)) issued to the
15 taxpayer addressing the employment status
16 of such individual or another individual
17 holding a substantially similar position
18 with the taxpayer, or

19 “(ii) a concluded examination (for em-
20 ployment tax purposes) of whether such in-
21 dividual (or another individual holding a
22 substantially similar position) should be
23 treated as an employee of the taxpayer,
24 with respect to which there was no deter-
25 mination that such individual (or another

1 individual holding a substantially similar
2 position) should be treated as an employee,
3 and

4 “(B) the taxpayer (or a predecessor) has
5 not treated any other individual holding a sub-
6 stantially similar position as an employee for
7 purposes of employment taxes for any period
8 beginning after December 31, 1977.

9 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—
10 “(1) EMPLOYMENT TAX.—The term ‘employ-
11 ment tax’ means any tax imposed by this subtitle.

12 “(2) EMPLOYMENT STATUS.—The term ‘em-
13 ployment status’ means the status of an individual,
14 under the usual common law rules applicable in de-
15 termining the employer-employee relationship, as an
16 employee or as an independent contractor (or other
17 individual who is not an employee).

18 “(c) SPECIAL RULES FOR APPLICATION OF SEC-
19 TION.—

20 “(1) NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF SECTION.—
21 An officer or employee of the Internal Revenue Serv-
22 ice shall, before or at the commencement of any ex-
23 amination relating to the employment status of one
24 or more individuals who perform services for the tax-

1 payer, provide the taxpayer with a written notice of
2 the provisions of this section.

3 “(2) RULES RELATING TO STATUTORY STAND-
4 ARDS.—For purposes of subsection (a)(2), with re-
5 spect to any period beginning after the date of the
6 enactment of this paragraph, a taxpayer may not
7 rely on an examination commenced, or a written de-
8 termination issued, more than 7 years before the be-
9 ginning of such period.

10 “(3) SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR POSITION.—For
11 purposes of this section, the determination as to
12 whether an individual holds a position substantially
13 similar to a position held by another individual shall
14 be made by the Secretary in a manner consistent
15 with the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

16 “(d) BURDEN OF PROOF.—A taxpayer must establish
17 entitlement to relief under this section by a preponderance
18 of the evidence.

19 “(e) PETITIONS FOR REVIEW OF STATUS.—

20 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Under procedures estab-
21 lished by the Secretary not later than 1 year after
22 the date of the enactment of this section, any indi-
23 vidual who performs services for a taxpayer may pe-
24 tition (either personally or through a designated rep-

1 representative or attorney) for a determination of the
2 individual's status for employment tax purposes.

3 “(2) ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES.—The pro-
4 cedures established under paragraph (1) shall pro-
5 vide for—

6 “(A) a determination of status not later
7 than 90 days after the filing of the petition
8 with respect to employment in any industry
9 (such as the construction industry) in which
10 employment is transient, casual, or seasonal,
11 and

12 “(B) an administrative appeal of any de-
13 termination that an individual is not an em-
14 ployee of the taxpayer.

15 “(3) PROHIBITION AGAINST RETALIATION.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—No taxpayer may dis-
17 charge an individual, refuse to contract with an
18 individual, or otherwise discriminate against an
19 individual with respect to compensation, terms,
20 conditions, or privileges of the services provided
21 by the individual because the individual (or any
22 designated representative or attorney on behalf
23 of such individual) filed a petition under para-
24 graph (1).

1 “(B) RIGHTS RETAINED BY INDIVIDUAL.—
2 Nothing in this paragraph shall be deemed to
3 diminish the rights, privileges, or remedies of
4 any individual under any Federal or State law,
5 or under any collective bargaining agreement.

6 “(f) RESULTS OF MISCLASSIFICATION DETERMINA-
7 TIONS.—In any case in which the Secretary determines
8 that a taxpayer has misclassified an individual as not an
9 employee for employment tax purposes, the Secretary shall
10 inform the Secretary of Labor about such misclassification
11 and notify the individual of any eligibility for the refund
12 of self-employment taxes under chapter 2.

13 “(g) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall, not later
14 than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this section,
15 prescribe such regulations as may be necessary and appro-
16 priate to carry out the purposes of this section.”.

17 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

18 (1) Paragraph (2) of section 7436(a) of such
19 Code is amended by striking “section 530 of the
20 Revenue Act of 1978” and inserting “section 3511”.

21 (2) The table of sections for chapter 25 of such
22 Code is amended by adding at the end the following
23 new item:

 “Sec. 3511. Safe harbor.”.

24 (c) TERMINATION OF SECTION 530 OF THE REV-
25 ENUE ACT OF 1978.—Section 530 of the Revenue Act of

1 1978 shall not apply to services rendered more than 1 year
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

3 (d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
4 this section shall apply to services rendered more than 1
5 year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

6 **SEC. 4. ANNUAL REPORTS ON WORKER**
7 **MISCLASSIFICATION.**

8 The Secretary of the Treasury shall issue an annual
9 report on worker misclassification. Such report shall in-
10 clude the following:

11 (1) Information on the number and type of en-
12 forcement actions against, and examinations of, em-
13 ployers who have misclassified workers.

14 (2) Relief obtained as a result of such actions
15 against, and examinations of, employers who have
16 misclassified workers.

17 (3) An overall estimate of the number of em-
18 ployers misclassifying workers, the number of work-
19 ers affected, and the industries involved.

20 (4) The impact of such misclassification on the
21 Federal tax system.

22 (5) Information on the outcomes of the peti-
23 tions filed under section 3511(e) of the Internal
24 Revenue Code of 1986.

1 **SEC. 5. INCREASE IN INFORMATION RETURN PENALTIES.**

2 (a) FAILURE TO FILE CORRECT INFORMATION RE-
3 TURNS.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 6721(a)(1) of the
5 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

6 (A) by striking “\$50” and inserting
7 “\$250”, and

8 (B) by striking “\$250,000” and inserting
9 “\$3,000,000”.

10 (2) REDUCTION WHERE CORRECTION IN SPECI-
11 FIED PERIOD.—

12 (A) CORRECTION WITHIN 30 DAYS.—Sec-
13 tion 6721(b)(1) of such Code is amended—

14 (i) by striking “\$15” and inserting
15 “\$50”,

16 (ii) by striking “\$50” and inserting
17 “\$250”, and

18 (iii) by striking “\$75,000” and insert-
19 ing “\$500,000”.

20 (B) FAILURES CORRECTED ON OR BEFORE
21 AUGUST 1.—Section 6721(b)(2) of such Code is
22 amended—

23 (i) by striking “\$30” and inserting
24 “\$100”,

25 (ii) by striking “\$50” and inserting
26 “\$250”, and

1 (iii) by striking “\$150,000” and in-
2 serting “\$1,500,000”.

3 (3) LOWER LIMITATION FOR PERSONS WITH
4 GROSS RECEIPTS OF NOT MORE THAN \$5,000,000.—
5 Section 6721(d)(1) of such Code is amended—

6 (A) in subparagraph (A)—

7 (i) by striking “\$100,000” and insert-
8 ing “\$1,000,000”, and

9 (ii) by striking “\$250,000” and in-
10 serting “\$3,000,000”,

11 (B) in subparagraph (B)—

12 (i) by striking “\$25,000” and insert-
13 ing “\$175,000”, and

14 (ii) by striking “\$75,000” and insert-
15 ing “\$500,000”, and

16 (C) in subparagraph (C)—

17 (i) by striking “\$50,000” and insert-
18 ing “\$500,000”, and

19 (ii) by striking “\$150,000” and in-
20 serting “\$1,500,000”.

21 (4) PENALTY IN CASE OF INTENTIONAL DIS-
22 REGARD.—Section 6721(e) of such Code is amend-
23 ed—

24 (A) by striking “\$100” in paragraph (2)
25 and inserting “\$500”,

1 (B) by striking “\$250,000” in paragraph
2 (3)(A) and inserting “\$3,000,000”.

3 (b) FAILURE TO FURNISH CORRECT PAYEE STATE-
4 MENTS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 6722(a) of such
6 Code is amended—

7 (A) by striking “\$50” and inserting
8 “\$250”, and

9 (B) by striking “\$100,000” and inserting
10 “\$1,000,000”.

11 (2) PENALTY IN CASE OF INTENTIONAL DIS-
12 REGARD.—Section 6722(c) of such Code is amend-
13 ed—

14 (A) by striking “\$100” in paragraph (1)
15 and inserting “\$500”, and

16 (B) by striking “\$100,000” in paragraph
17 (2)(A) and inserting “\$1,000,000”.

18 (c) FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH OTHER INFORMA-
19 TION REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Section 6723 of such
20 Code is amended—

21 (1) by striking “\$50” and inserting “\$250”,
22 and

23 (2) by striking “\$100,000” and inserting
24 “\$1,000,000”.

1 (d) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by
2 this section shall apply with respect to information returns
3 required to be filed after December 31, 2008.

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