



Highlights of [GAO-12-909T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on TARP, Financial Services and Bailouts of Public and Private Programs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

Why GAO Prepared This Testimony

The Delphi Corporation was a global supplier of mobile electronics and transportation systems that began as part of GM and was spun off in 1999. Delphi filed for bankruptcy in 2005, and in July 2009, PBGC terminated Delphi's six defined benefit pension plans and assumed trusteeship of the plans. Because of the resulting differences in participant benefits, questions have been raised about how PBGC came to terminate the plans, whether treatment for certain Delphi workers was preferential, and the role of Treasury in these outcomes.

GAO's testimony describes key events related to the termination of Delphi pension plans and the reasons for GM providing retirement benefit supplements to certain Delphi employees, and Treasury's role in those events. The testimony is based on GAO's March and December 2011 reports that examine these and other related issues. In preparing these reports, GAO relied on publicly available documents—such as GM and Delphi bankruptcy filings, Treasury officials' depositions, and company reports to the Securities and Exchange Commission—and on documents received from groups GAO interviewed, including Delphi, GM, the Delphi Salaried Retirees Association, PBGC, and Treasury. GAO also coordinated with the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program (SIGTARP) because of that office's work on Treasury's role in GM's decision to provide top-ups for certain hourly workers, including whether the Administration or Treasury pressured GM to provide additional funding for the hourly plan.

View [GAO-12-909T](#). For more information, contact A. Nicole Clowers at (202) 512-8678 or clowersa@gao.gov or Barbara Bovbjerg at (202) 512-7215 or bovbjergb@gao.gov.

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DELPHI BANKRUPTCY

Termination of Delphi Pension Plans

What GAO Found

The termination of the six defined benefit plans the Delphi Corporation (Delphi) sponsored, and the provision of benefit protections to some Delphi employees but not others, culminated from a complex series of events involving Delphi, the General Motors Corporation (GM), various unions, the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury), and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). When Delphi spun off from GM in 1999, three unions secured an agreement that GM would provide a retirement benefit supplement (referred to as "top-ups") for their members should their pension plans be frozen or terminated and they were to suffer a resulting loss in pension benefits. These three unions were: (1) the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW); (2) the International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers, AFL-CIO (IUE); and (3) the United Steelworkers of America (USWA). No other Delphi employees had a similar agreement to receive a top-up, including salaried workers and hourly workers belonging to other unions. Over the course of events that unfolded over the next decade, the agreements with these three unions ultimately were preserved through the resolution of the bankruptcies of both GM and Delphi. Because Delphi's pension plans were terminated with insufficient assets to pay all accrued benefits, and because PBGC must adhere to statutory limits on the benefits it guarantees, many Delphi employees will receive a reduced pension benefit from PBGC compared with the benefits promised by their defined benefit plans. Those Delphi employees receiving the top-ups will have their reduced PBGC benefit supplemented by GM while others will not.

As GM's primary lender in bankruptcy, Treasury played a significant role in helping GM resolve the Delphi bankruptcy. Treasury's effort to restructure GM included helping GM find the best resolution of the Delphi bankruptcy from GM's perspective. This effort was guided by the following principles: preserving GM's supply chain, resolving Delphi's bankruptcy as quickly as possible, and doing so with the least possible amount of investment by GM. However, court filings and statements from GM and Treasury officials suggest that Treasury deferred to GM's business judgment on decisions about the Delphi pension plans—that is, their sponsorship and the decision to honor existing top-up agreements. According to public records and Treasury officials, Treasury agreed with GM's assessment that the company could not afford the potential costs of taking over sponsorship of the Delphi hourly plan, but that the company had solid commercial reasons to honor previously negotiated top-up agreements with some unions. Nevertheless, Treasury officials said that Treasury did not explicitly approve or disapprove of GM's agreement to honor previously negotiated top-up agreements. PBGC officials stated that PBGC decided to terminate the plans independently of Treasury input.