

## 'Church plans' get some relief thanks to a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision"



Carl J. Grassi | Tuesday, July 18, 2017

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision — *Advocate Health Care Network v. Stapleton, et al.* — that is sure to have a substantial impact.

The Supreme Court determined that church-affiliated organizations, such as religious-affiliated hospitals and parochial schools, can establish employee benefit plans known as "church plans."

Church plans are retirement plans which are exempt from having to comply with the requirements of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, commonly known as ERISA. ERISA provides protections to participants in qualified retirement plans, such as stringent funding, notice and disclosure requirements, and fiduciary duties, from which church plans are exempt. In addition, church plans are not covered by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. (PBGC), saving such plan sponsors substantial dollars that would be incurred by paying premiums for such coverage.

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