

Israel (Izzy) Goldowitz, a partner with The Wagner Law Group in Washington, DC, has more than 40 years of experience in employee benefits, most notably with mergers and acquisitions, restructuring, and bankruptcy as they affect pension plans. As the Chief Counsel for the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), Izzy led the legal teams that helped save the pensions of such companies as Chrysler and American Airlines. Working closely with financial analysts, actuaries and outside advisors, he also led the legal teams that negotiated pension protections with such companies as Sears and Gannett, lending to his unique experience in the mitigation of risks to pensions resulting from corporate transactions, including mergers, acquisitions, secured borrowing and downsizing.

Izzy is a seasoned litigator who has helped establish several key precedents in the U.S. Supreme Court and Courts of Appeals. Among them are decisions upholding mandatory arbitration of withdrawal liability claims, defining the rules for terminating single-employer plans and for related asset distributions, and confirming the application of ERISA in pension disputes in bankruptcy.

Izzy began his career with the United Mine Workers of America Health & Retirement Funds, a pioneering group of multiemployer plans. He was the lead PBGC attorney on multiemployer transactions, rulings and advice for many years, and most recently, oversaw that work as PBGC's Deputy General Counsel for Program Law and Policy. He has also had charge of several friend-of-court briefs that helped shape the law governing multiemployer plans.

While serving as Deputy General Counsel, Izzy also oversaw the development of regulations and other guidance for the PBGC single-employer and multiemployer insurance programs and advised Congress on legislative proposals affecting those programs. Additionally, he advised on retirement security in general, including new models for improving employee coverage while limiting employer cost and exposure.

Izzy is well known in the ERISA and bankruptcy community and to leaders in government, business, employee, and retiree associations, and academia. He is a frequent speaker and has written book chapters, articles, and continuing legal education materials on both employee benefits and bankruptcy topics. Izzy was a member of the Board of Governors of the American College of Employee Benefits Counsel and is active in the International Pension and Employee Benefits Lawyers Association. He served on the Labor and Benefits Advisory Committee to the American Bankruptcy Institute's Chapter 11 Reform Commission and co-wrote the report of the pension subcommittee. Izzy taught in the Georgetown University Law Center Masters of Law program for more than 20 years and is a member of the University of Illinois-Chicago Law School Employee Benefits Advisory Board. He earned his J.D. from George Washington University National Law Center and his B.A. in History from Boston University.

Izzy is admitted in the District of Columbia and the state of New York.