

direct or indirect economic enjoyment of policy cash value, making current taxation of the non-owner's interest in the cash value appropriate under the doctrines of constructive receipt, economic benefit, and cash equivalence.

These proposed regulations provide that the non-owner has current access to any portion of the policy cash value that is directly or indirectly accessible by the non-owner, inaccessible to the owner, or inaccessible to the owner's general creditors. For this purpose, "access" is to be construed broadly and includes any direct or indirect right under the arrangement of the non-owner to obtain, use, or realize potential economic value from the policy cash value. Thus, for example, a non-owner has current access to policy cash value if the non-owner can directly or indirectly make a withdrawal from the policy, borrow from the policy, or effect a total or partial surrender of the policy. Similarly, for example, the non-owner has current access if the non-owner can anticipate, assign (either at law or in equity), alienate, pledge, or encumber the policy cash value or if the policy cash value is available to the non-owner's creditors by attachment, garnishment, levy, execution, or other legal or equitable process. Policy cash value is inaccessible to the owner if the owner does not have the full rights to policy cash value normally held by an owner of a life insurance contract. Policy cash value is inaccessible to the owner's general creditors if, under the terms of the split-dollar life insurance arrangement or by operation of law or any contractual undertaking, the creditors cannot, for any reason, effectively reach the full policy cash value in the event of the owner's insolvency.

In a typical equity split-dollar life insurance arrangement, the non-owner has current access to all portions of the policy cash value in excess of the amount payable to the owner. In many arrangements, the non-owner may also have current access to the portion of the cash value payable to the owner if, for example, that portion of the policy cash value is for any reason not accessible to the owner or the owner's general creditors.

Under these proposed regulations, policy cash value is determined without regard to surrender charges or other similar charges or reductions. To provide uniformity, certainty, and administrative ease, policy cash value generally is determined on the last day of the non-owner's taxable year. In addition, solely for purposes of employment tax (as defined in § 1.61-22(c)(5) of the 2002 proposed

regulations) and the penalty for failure to pay estimated income taxes, the portion of the policy cash value that is treated as provided by the owner to the non-owner during the non-owner's taxable year is treated as so provided on the last day of that taxable year. The IRS and the Treasury Department request comments regarding circumstances in which it might be appropriate to use a different date for employment tax withholding purposes.

Several commentators on the 2002 proposed regulations asserted that those regulations were contrary to the intention, announced by the IRS and the Treasury Department in Notice 2002-8 (2002-1 C.B. 398), to publish proposed regulations that will not treat an owner as having made a transfer of a portion of the cash surrender value of a life insurance contract to a non-owner for purposes of section 83 solely because interest or other earnings credited to the cash surrender value of the contract cause the cash surrender value to exceed the portion thereof payable to the owner. The valuation methodology described in these proposed regulations, however, does not treat an owner as having made a transfer under section 83 solely because of growth in policy cash value. Rather, this approach, consistent with the doctrines of constructive receipt, economic benefit, and cash equivalence, treats the non-owner as having a taxable interest in policy cash value only to the extent that the non-owner has current access to the policy cash value.

Several commentators stated that a non-owner who includes in income a portion of the policy cash value should be credited with "inside build-up" on that portion of the policy cash value. This result might be appropriate if there were actual transfers of ownership of the underlying life insurance contract (or a portion thereof) from the owner to the non-owner. Here, by contrast to transfers described in § 1.61-22(g) of the 2002 proposed regulations, no part of the life insurance contract is actually transferred from the owner to the non-owner by reason of the non-owner's taking policy cash value into account.

In addition, some commentators expressed the view that, under the economic benefit regime, if the policy cash value in one year is less than the policy cash value in a prior year, the non-owner should be allowed a loss to the extent this difference was included in income in the prior year. Consistent with the underlying doctrines of constructive receipt, economic benefit, and cash equivalence, a loss should not be allowed in this situation. Note, however, that under § 1.61-

22(g)(4)(ii)(A) of the 2002 proposed regulations, if a life insurance contract is transferred from an owner to a non-owner (the transferee), the transferee's investment in the contract under section 72(e) will include the amount of economic benefits previously taken into account by the transferee prior to the transfer.

#### c. Current Term Life Insurance Protection

These proposed regulations provide that, in the case of an equity split-dollar life insurance arrangement governed by the economic benefit regime, the value of the economic benefits provided to a non-owner for a taxable year also includes the cost of current life insurance protection provided to the non-owner. The cost of current life insurance protection provided to the non-owner in any year equals the amount of the current life insurance protection provided to the non-owner multiplied by the life insurance premium factor designated or permitted in guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin. The amount of the current life insurance protection (including paid-up additions thereto) provided to the non-owner for a taxable year equals the excess of the average death benefit of the life insurance contract over the sum of the total amount payable to the owner (including any outstanding policy loans that offset amounts otherwise payable to the owner) under the split-dollar life insurance arrangement and the portion of the policy cash value actually taken into account for the current taxable year or for any prior taxable year. This subtraction of the portion of the policy cash value actually taken into account by the non-owner prevents the non-owner from being taxed twice on the same amount, once as part of the policy cash value to which the non-owner has current access and again as an amount provided to the non-owner in the form of death benefit protection.

#### d. Other Economic Benefits

These proposed regulations provide that, in the case of an equity split-dollar life insurance arrangement governed by the economic benefit regime, the value of all other economic benefits provided to the non-owner must be taken into account (to the extent not actually taken into account for a prior taxable year). For this purpose, the term "other economic benefits" should be construed broadly to include any benefit, right, or feature of the life insurance contract (other than current life insurance protection and policy cash value)