



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

March 9, 1998

H. J. Res. 78

**A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the
United States restoring religious freedom**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary on March 5, 1998

H. J. Res. 78 would propose amending the Constitution to secure people's rights to religious freedom. The legislatures of three-fourths of the states would be required to ratify the proposed amendment within seven years for the amendment to become effective.

CBO estimates that adopting this amendment would result in no significant cost to the federal government. Because enactment of H. J. Res. 78 would not affect direct spending or receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

CBO is uncertain whether section 4 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA), which excludes from consideration under that act any bill or joint resolution that enforces constitutional rights of individuals, applies to H. J. Res. 78. If the joint resolution is not excluded from consideration under UMRA, uncertainties about how it would be interpreted and implemented make it impossible to determine whether it would impose any intergovernmental mandates and what the costs of any such mandates might be. The joint resolution would impose no private-sector mandates.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Susanne S. Mehlman (for the federal costs), and Leo Lex (for the state and local impact). This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.