



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

November 13, 2003

S. 1685

Basic Pilot Program Extension and Expansion Act of 2003

As reported by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on November 6, 2003

CBO estimates that implementing S. 1685 would cost about \$1 million in fiscal year 2004 and around \$2 million a year over the 2005-2008 period, assuming the availability of appropriations. Enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues. S. 1685 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) administer three pilot programs to assist employers in confirming the eligibility of prospective employees to work in the United States. The programs provide employers with software, training, and access to BCIS and SSA databases to determine work eligibility. Under current law, the major pilot program will end in November 2003, while the two other programs will terminate in 2005. S. 1685 would extend each program by five years and would expand the major pilot program to all 50 states by December 1, 2004. (Currently, it is offered in only six states.)

According to the BCIS, it costs \$600,000 a year to operate the programs, mostly for the major pilot program. Implementing S. 1685 would extend the major pilot program through the end of fiscal year 2008 and would extend the other two programs until the middle of fiscal year 2010. Thus, CBO estimates that extending the current programs would cost about \$600,000 a year over the 2004-2008 period.

The major pilot program is currently available to employers in California, Florida, New York, Texas, Illinois, and Nebraska. These states contain more than one-third of the nation's businesses. According to BCIS, expanding the major pilot program to all 50 states would cost about \$1 million annually, beginning in fiscal year 2005. In total, implementing S. 1685 would cost about \$1 million in fiscal year 2004 and around \$2 million a year thereafter, subject to the availability of appropriations.

On October 3, 2003, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 2359, the Basic Pilot Extension Act of 2003, as ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary on

September 24, 2003. The two bills are similar, but that legislation would expand the major pilot program to all 50 states upon enactment. Thus, CBO estimated that implementing H.R. 2359 would cost around \$2 million a year over the 2004-2008 period, assuming the availability of appropriated funds.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Mark Grabowicz. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.